

Joaquin Miller's Poems

INTRODUCTION
AND AUTOBIOGRAPHY

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Bear Edition

Joaquin Miller's Poems

[in six volumes]

Volume One
An Introduction, Etc.



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1909

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1909

TO
MY PARENTS
HULINGS
AND MARGARET WITT MILLER

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AN INTRODUCTION

AN INTRODUCTION

Chapter 1

CAMP AND CABINS



LET us sound a bugle rally for the lovers of song. Never was there so much poetry, beauty, glory, good, in all the world as at this hour. Earth only asks expression. Let us cry aloud in the wilderness, "the king is coming," and prepare the way. The darkest hour is always just before day. I conjure you, my lovers, do not despair, but exult in this pastoral and progressive age of action.

There is more true poetry in the rush of a single railroad train across the continent than in all that gory story of burning Troy. The mighty engine, the heroic engineer, the clean, Christian, cultured argonauts are waiting their poet, that is all.

Every invention, whether for commerce or agriculture, is a poem waiting its prophet; a song as sweet and sacred as a psalm of David. Every engine that uplifts man or lightens man's work is even as a Song of Solomon. I declare to you that when we are all forgotten this practical age, which so many are ready to deride, will shine forth as the fairest, truest, best in all history, and song, and story will celebrate those despised days of ours as more chivalrous than all the Crusaders; more liberty-loving, clean, Christian, than Cromwell and Milton ever dreamed.

In dedicating this final edition of my poems to the memory of my parents, please let me

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introduce them to you, and, incidentally, introduce myself, for it really seems to me that from the day I was suddenly discovered and pointed out in London I have been an entire stranger in my own land; the land I have loved, lived for, battled for from the first. As for that red-shirted and hairy man bearing my name abroad and "standing before kings," I never saw him, never heard of him until on returning to my own country I found that this unpleasant and entirely impossible figure ever attended and even overshadowed my most earnest work. I desire that my lines shall be read and remembered for the merit which the British seem to have discovered in them, and quite apart from that creation of the American imagination, the stalwart, red-shirted and six-shootered hairy man of the Sierra Nevada Mountains. Hence this sketch of my gentle and pious parents; involving the story of my stormy youth.

My cradle was a covered wagon, pointed west. I was born in a covered wagon, I am told, at or about the time it crossed the line dividing Indiana from Ohio, wherein my mother was born. Her people had come up from the Yadkin river country, North Carolina, whither they had gone with the Boones from Berks county, Pennsylvania; devoted Quakers in quest of a newer land, where there might be less friction. Daniel Boone's mother was a most devout Quaker and tried to keep her sons content to remain in the Yadkin Valleys, but Daniel, declaring that he could not live on shadows and that the deer of that land were little more than shadows, gradually led his people out beyond the Alleghanies, west; most of them going to Kentucky, but some going to Ohio, then into Indiana.

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People were gregarious in the early days—danger, if not desire made them clannish. My mother's people were Dutch, not Germans, as has been so often said, and they were the oldest Dutch in the land—the Falls and the Witts, de Witts, at home. They ferried the Ohio at Cincinnati and ascending the hill pitched tent about where the university now stands; where the venerable Mrs. Fall died and was buried.

The war of 1812 took most of these restless men into the field. General Proctor and Tecumseh came down together from Canada; the elder Harrison was sent to oppose them. Governor Shelby of Kentucky called for 1,500 men—about all the new State, the first in the Union could muster. My grandfather Miller, of Scotch stock, from Kentucky, was among the first of those who answered the call, and fell at Fort Meigs on the Maumee river. I have read he was an officer, but hope and believe he was of the ranks. Please let the dead patriot escape the persecution of idiots seeking an ancestry. He had left his family at Cincinnati, where my papa grew up, was educated and early became a school teacher.

In those days, the teachers, as a rule, were foreign born, Scotch or Irish mostly. The boys in a certain district, a little distance back from the Ohio river, had "turned out" their teacher, a big Scotch bully, for refusing to provide a barrel of Xmas apples, a custom of the times, and as neither pupils nor teacher would yield, the trustees sent to Cincinnati for a substitute. My papa, then a student, answered the call. He was a most painstaking teacher. His penmanship was perfect. Years after his death, while in New York, I received a letter

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with the address so like that I had been in the habit of receiving from him that it startled me. It proved to be a kindly letter from the mayor of Kingston, New York, asking if I were not the son of his early teacher, and he proceeded to tell me about how they had instituted the "lockout" against their big Scotch teacher who had been in the habit of beating them. Then he told me how the new teacher had called them up the first morning and said, "Boys and girls, one word before we open school; I have been sent to teach you, not to beat you. I never struck any human being a blow in my life; and I never will. I want to be kind to you and I want you to be kind to me. I need your kindness, and I think you need mine. Let us try and be friends for a week, at least, and then if you are not entirely satisfied, I will gladly go back to Cincinnati."

My very first recollection is as vivid as could be any event of yesterday. My papa was moving his little family in a covered wagon from Liberty, Union county, Indiana, to a cabin in Randolph county, where he was going to teach school; but the wagon got stalled in the quicksand of a swollen stream and he had to get out into the water, to his waist, carrying us all out, one at a time, on his back. It took him and mother a long time to get the horses and wagon out and over the stream, but they were very patient and quiet about it and built a big fire and camped there for the night. It was my first camp, the first of a life time, mainly of camps and I was exultant with delight. The horses had hay and oats from the feed trough that hung at the back of the wagon and the rattling of the bridles and harness and the munching of the hay was as music I had heard in another world.

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Then mother made supper as we dried our clothes by the roaring fire and spread a table cloth on the grass under the stars and we all sat down on the ground and papa said grace and thanked God that we were all safe across the angry waters. As the hearty meal concluded, mother went to the wagon and taking out a bottle of preserves she came and sat down by papa and slyly unrolled from tissue paper three little silver teaspoons, and handed one to each of her three little boys.

"Why Margaret," said papa. Then mother laid her head on his shoulder and cried. I had never seen mother cry before and it was a long time before we could eat the preserves. I never saw the little spoons any more, but wondered a thousand times why mother cried and what became of the little teaspoons. Nearly thirty years after, when the world was coming my way a little, I went back to my mother's people there, none of whom I had ever seen to remember, and told a venerable aunt of this, my earliest recollection and the incident about the teaspoons, and asked her why mother had cried.

She shook her head sadly, and then told me that after Grandpapa Witt had divided up his ample fortune with his many children that papa had aspired to be a merchant—"storekeeper" it was called then. But being too openhanded, he had the sheriff in the house in less than a year. In those days nothing was exempt—nothing, not even your bed, or table ware. But mother had saved the three teaspoons for her three little boys—a blessed deed for dear mother, but papa did not know it until then, and in the simplicity of his honest heart he felt on seeing them that the sheriff should have had the three teaspoons along with all the other things.

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I recall Randolph county only as a sea of sugar trees, with here and there a little island of stumps, a cabin and a struggling little field of corn encircled with a high rail fence—too high for us little boys to climb. We, going to school or to the sugar camp always had a “creep hole.” Gates were not in those days. The cabin in which we found ourselves the day after we had “stalled” in the stream was one that had been abandoned by the owner of the ground. The school house was a cabin with but one room and a huge fireplace that took up nearly the entire end of the edifice. The three big girls that came to school hung their shawls and poke bonnets on pegs behind the door. There were about a dozen big boys, and they and papa kept the big fireplace roaring and blazing. This was the only way to keep warm. The floor was the solid earth and the windows were long, narrow strips of greased paper. This gave not such a bad light as might be imagined; nor was it at all primitive. I have seen in the later years of my life whole cities in the interior of China with no other windows in their finest houses than oiled paper. These big boys would snowball, whoop, and hurrah during recess, after they had cut and carried in plenty of wood; but they were good boys and tried hard to improve. Most of them were full grown, and none of them aspired to anything beyond reading and writing. The writing desks were made of big puncheons, hewn from maple logs, resting on enormous pegs driven into the wall. Papa made all the pens from goose quills brought in by the big boys and set all the “copy.” The big boys were good to papa and very good natured toward my elder brother and myself, the only little ones in school. One of these

tall and ungainly big boys went to Congress, then to the Mexican war, became a famous general, then was made governor of Oregon, then Senator, and in the early sixties was chosen as candidate for Vice President on the ticket with Breckenridge, who was beaten by Abraham Lincoln. There was one big boy, Alexander, who came to school entirely barefooted, although there was frost on the ground, and often snow. Papa would not let him help getting in the firewood, and in return Alec would be first at school in the morning and have a roaring big fire going by the time "the master" came. Everybody was very, very poor. The scholars had to pay their own tuition entirely; the free school had not yet penetrated the dense maple tree wilderness of that region. The only source of income was the sugar camp, supplemented by an occasional coon skin.

These were "cash" at 50 cents and sugar was ready money at a round figure, for the Indians who had sold their sugar camps bought the sugar; but the season was short for the sugar camps at best and poverty prevailed with piteous uniformity. At last there was a breath of spring in the tossing tops of the maple trees and gray, black and fox squirrels began to leap from branch to branch overhead and chatter and quirk their tossy tails, the crows cawed and cawed from the tallest tree tops, the blue jay jawed us from the spice and hazel bush as we passed, and school was dismissed, for it was "sugar making time."

Papa and mother made their sugar camp half a mile from the cabin in the middle of a great gray maple tree grove and hung up three big iron kettles on a cross beam and against these they rolled great

logs on either side, filling in the space under the kettles with kindling wood and chunks. Papa had worked continually every spare hour, except Sunday when he had a Bible class at the school house, making sugar troughs and spiles. The troughs were made by splitting basswood short logs in twain and then cutting out the inside, making a little trough about three feet long and six inches deep. The spiles were driven into auger holes, piercing at an upward angle, a little notch chipped into the soft gray side of the generous maple tree. Then little grooves, leading down to the spiles. All the trees had been tapped from time immemorial by the Indians, and they were badly scarred by a thousand tomahawks. But they seemed to have forgiven all this when papa tapped them this early spring, and the sap ran so generously that you could hear it not only dripping, but actually streaming from the spiles into the white new troughs. The Indians liked my parents, who worked not only from dawn to dusk but often till midnight boiling the sap, and bought the big forty pound cakes of sugar as fast as they could be made.

There was an ancient hollow oak near the camp which had been used by the Indian as a shelter in sugar time, and there we little boys were very happy, waking up now and then and looking through the natural door or window to see the steam surging up from the kettles out of the great cracking heaps of logs and to look and wonder at our toiling parents with love and silent reverence.

After awhile Grandpapa Witt came, with a little more dowry for mother, and with his practical good sense had plans perfected to move the family to the Miami Reservation; half of which was about to be

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opened to settlement. With what money he had brought and my parents had made, a good team, cow and six sheep were got together and again we "moved"; the covered wagon in the narrow rough road and we three little old, very old, prematurely old boys, brought up behind with the cow and six fat and docile sheep.

Happy? Very, very happy, but we had heard mother crying in the night so many times the last year, had seen papa so sad all the time in his hard and continual toil that we were as old men now, even in childhood and instead of toys and games we took to the stock for diversion, loved the cow, rode her, "petted her" and named the sheep pet names, and taught them each one to stop, turn about and even to come back to us at call, as we slowly made our exodus from the sugar camp to the Miami Reservation.

The rush of settlers for the newly opened half of the old Miami Reservation on the Massassinewa river, a broad, clear and most beautiful stream, populous with fish and banked by groves and wild flowers and ancient apple trees, was so great, that we had to go about three miles down from the "settlements," as the older part of Grant county was called, before finding vacant land. This three miles was a solid wood, dense, dark and full of wonder; not a cabin, nor a "clearing," only little camps, a covered wagon and a tent or so here and there.

Papa got a good claim on the banks of Cart creek and about a mile from the south bank of the beautiful river. The woods were dense indeed and a road had to be cut for the wagon. But the generous neighbors came from far about and opened a road,

cut down trees, hewed logs with broad axes and, as I remember it now, a house was built and covered with "shakes," held in place by weight poles, for there were no nails, and a flat floor of puncheons laid, as if we had an Aladdin's lamp—so suddenly and so gently was it all done.

Bed quilts and coverlets which mother's own hand had pieced or woven, were hung up for doors, greased paper was pasted up for windows, a fireplace of stones from the creek, with broad flat rocks from the river for a hearth, and we were at home in "our own house."

We two elder boys, four and six, had been given tomahawks by the kindly Indians on setting out for this new home and now we hacked and heaped brush all about, clearing, clearing, clearing. It is very wonderful what a boy can do with a hatchet. Papa told us over and over all about George Washington; and I remember feeling very sorry that he never had had such opportunities to be happy.

A great elm, not the popular Eastern shade tree, but the rare slippery elm, the bark of which is "good medicine," stood near the house, a menace in storms, and this papa felled. What a crash! And then he measured off the first ten feet for a rail-cut and proceeded to split it. Mother was busy making Jimmy his first pants, and she, wanting to surprise him with his new dignity had us older boys with our industrious hatchets take him out to papa.

"Splits like a ribbon," shouted papa as we came to where he, with maul and iron wedge, had opened the great elm trunk. And wild with delight he kept on making rails. I never knew a rail-cut to split so beautifully. It was as easy as if the log had been a mighty watermelon. He turned out rails almost

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as fast as we could count them, fragrant, perfect in fashion, as if cut with a saw and so light in weight that we two boys, one at each end could easily lift them out of his way, while he kept on with maul and iron wedge and ax till he had more than 200. Then he hurriedly put up a fence, a beautiful, fragrant, red and yellow fence. Then he caught up Jimmy, kissed and hugged and sat him down in the corner of his fence.

"Run in and tell mother Jimmy is in a fence corner."

"Where? Where is Jimmy did you say?"

"Why out there in the fence corner. Come and see."

She hastened out, the new pants in her hand, and there she found Jimmy, a lord and emperor in his own right, in a fence corner which papa had fashioned with his own untried and not over strong hand that very hour. And then they took off his little petticoat and put on his first pants. I can not see why they both should have cried; but they did, as they leaned over and caressed him while we bigger boys looked on silently in piteous wonder. Then they sat him on the fence and laughed. At which we boys shouted and danced all about with delight.

The autumn weather was beautiful, beautiful. The woods were fragrant with the glory of the Indian summer, a sea of indescribable color; a burning bush on every hand, and the Infinite visible on the minutest tawny fiber underfoot or glittering leaf of gold overhead.

That night, our heaps of brush having been made dry and combustible from the warm winds were set on fire by our parents as we three slept together in the cabin at the foot of their bed. The great flames

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lighted up the house through the improvised window panes, and we two boys starting up ran out in fear. But seeing our parents happy in their hard tasks, returned and watched them through the window.

Years ago I was asked by some ladies of that region to recall some incident touching our family at that early date, and I set down this as the first recollection in my life. And so it was on the spur of the moment, but since the death of these two brave and silent builders of the State, I have recalled not only the fashionings of the first fence of all that district, but many an earlier tender memory of these scenes and times of those two most lovable Soldiers of Civilization.



Chapter 2

LIFE AMONG THE INDIANS OF INDIANA



DO not know how, or even why my father was made a magistrate—maybe appointed by the governor at request of the new settlers in the new neighborhood. I am only certain that it was not only without his request, but without his knowledge or consent. He was the most shy man I have ever met in a long life of contact with my fellow-man. But for all that he was Squire or Judge Miller from that day till up in his seventy-third year, when he himself passed on and up to judgment. Whenever he sat down in his many immigrations he was elected squire, and had to perform marriages and to hear petty troubles and pass judgment on his neighbors.

The first trial that impressed itself on my mind was that of some Indians. The rule established by the agent across the river among the Indians was to the effect that so long as they remained on the reservation they should judge themselves and rule according to their traditions and sense of justice; but that if they left the reservation and went over on the white man's ground, for which they had been paid and were still receiving generous annuities, they must abide by the white man's judgments.

There was a bad white man named George Sparks (there are always bad white men hovering around where there are good Indians with good money), and he had a "doggery" over on the other side of Pipe creek in the edge of the settlements.

The narrow little trail over which Indians could ride their little ponies led from the reservation to this bad place by way of our new home. Indians often stopped in on their way back. Once some tall splendid fellows in their red and yellow blankets got down at the cabin door and standing in the middle of our floor, struck some sulphur matches and held them up for mother to see them burn. What a miracle! I guess they had never seen matches before. I know mother never had, and it was hard to believe that fire could be made to come out of the end of a little stick, and her surprise was sincere and deep. This delighted the simple-hearted Indians, and, with many a "haw-haw," they rode away in their long single file through the brush toward Pipe creek. After they had gone mother and I and the rest of us picked up the dead stumps from the floor and rubbed them hard on the hearth stone, but no fire. Papa wore one entirely out and hurt his finger on the rough stone before he gave it up. He was full of wonder that he, who knew all sorts of books, could not get fire out of a little stick as well as a blanket Indian.

On the return from one of these too frequent trips to the Pipe creek doggery they were noisy and rode with uncertain seat. And they had a poor battered and bleeding Indian tied with a rope, led in the rear, with a rope around his neck. Four of the Indians, the oldest of a numerous band, were sober Indians at the head of the unsteady party. They tied their horses to the new fence, completed now, and selecting the lowest place, led by the sober Indians they all came in and squatted in the yard around their prisoner. Then a sober old man asked for the white man to come and judge them all.

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Papa stood in the door. Mother, who always had a natural dignity, gave him the only chair, and he sat down looking severely at the poor naked and badly mutilated prisoner. With a singular wisdom he beckoned the oldest Indian to rise and tell him the truth. Indians, as the patriarchs of old, always have great reverence for age.

The old Indian dropped his blanket from his shoulders and pointing to all the Indians except the three at his side, one after another, said, "Cock-kusee! Cock-kusee! Cock-kusee! Drunk, drunk, drunk."

At this papa slowly and sadly shook his head, looking first at the nearest Indian a long time and so on to the last. Then he beckoned the first to take the rich red silk shawl which he had muffled about his neck and put it about the loins of the pitiful wretch in the middle of the group. He had been kept standing all the time with his shaggy and battered head held low on his breast. The Indian, respecting this as his part of the sentence, rose on his feet at once and not only handed over the gaudy bit of garment, but helped the poor prisoner put it decently about his naked thighs. Then he beckoned the next one to put one of his extra blankets on his shoulders. Indians in those days generally wore all they had to wear. Three shirts was no unusual thing at the date of this settlement, and they were always of the most gaudy sort and often of the richest silk.

By this time the other Indians caught up the idea that they too must pay the penalty, and one after the other took off something and put it on the naked man till he was clothed better than the best. Then the old "sober Indian" took a rich red handkerchief

from about his neck and tied it about his head, pushing back the blood matted hair that hung down over his face, and poking him gently in the stomach with his fist, made him stand up straight and look him in the face. The name of this old Indian was Shingle-Ma-See. Another "sober Indian," Jim-Sas-See-Grass, a mighty hunter, gave him a pair of red flannel leggins. This revealed another pair of leggins, frilled buckskin, underneath the red ones. But with all this wealth and new dignity the mutilated little man seemed not quite satisfied, and another "sober Indian" handed over an extra old blanket. Then one Indian after another kept handing over things till the mean little prisoner was almost smothered with clothes. He was revealing the very trait no doubt that had made him despised. The climax came when he made sign that he must have a horse to ride. There was no spare pony and no true Indian of this tribe would be seen on foot.

Who this despised Indian was no one can say at this distance of years, but from my experience I should say he had come to the tribe of Miami as a traveler or, more properly, a tramp. Indians are, or were, great travelers. They were always welcome, no matter where from or when, war or peace. For, as there were no fortifications to betray or expose, they were never treated as spies or suspected of evil designs. They paid their way by describing strange lands through which they passed, making maps or figures in the ashes of the camp fires or in little heaps of sand. But there was this difference between the Indian traveler of the old days and the white traveler of the present date—he must always tell the truth. A Marco Polo would have been disgraced and driven out of camp the

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first hour of his stay, or possibly have lost his scalp on the spot.

A Rocky Mountain Indian of the old days who had descended as far as St. Louis and seen a steamboat, tried to tell about it on his return, and described it as big as about ten canoes the first night of his narrative. The next night he spoke of it as being as big as about fifty canoes. The chief stopped him and reminded the tribe, all gathered about on his right to hear the wonderful story, that he had said ten canoes at first. The honest traveler admitted this and tendered his scalp, explaining that he was afraid to say at first how big it really was. Then he was urged to tell how big, but he loudly protested that he was still afraid, for if they should heap all the canoes to be found in the mountain lakes and rivers together they would not have half enough to make a single steamboat. He was still urged to go on, but when he tried to make the noise of the wheels and the puff and piercing scream of the monster, he nearly took the roof off the council house, and it seemed was going to kill himself in his honest effort, when the chief thought him a maniac and made him get out.

This dismal little dusky man who stood before his judge, with the tribe squatted about, was possibly a Ute or Blackfoot; anyway, he was from some barren and blowy land. For the people as well as the trees grow close to the ground in bleak and windy countries, and they are low and dark in mind and body, as well as in stature.

Papa hesitated a long time before deciding what to do with this mass of silk and wool, old clothes and new, and then at last he beckoned the last donor to take back his gift, then another, then another,

then another till the beggar had only meagre raiment and an extra blanket.

Then he slowly rose up, closed his hands, bowed slowly three times to old Shingle-Ma-See, and sat down. The trial had concluded. Then the sober Indians came forward, one at a time, and reaching the right hand, said heartily: "How! How! Shake! Shake!"

Then the other Indians, all sober now, or nearly so, came up and did the same. Then the mean little dark man reached his hand, but papa did not notice it, only motioning Shingle-Ma-See to lead off. Then he made sign by closing his eyes with his head aside that the dismal man must stay with him, and stay for three moons, till well and strong. At this all the Indians were glad and excited with delight—that is, as much excited as an Indian ever allows himself to be—and again coming forward, shouted: "How! How!" and shaking hands heartily they made their way over the low place in the fence, untied their ponies, and, following their old chief in long, single file, were soon lost in the dense woods on their way home.

Our savage soon washed his face, we all sat down to dinner together, and when he had hastily eaten, got my brother's tomahawk and went for wood. He slept by the fireplace in his blanket and kept the cabin warm all night.

"My," said mother next morning as we sat together at breakfast and talked of the magistrate's first "trial." "My," but I did want that red silk shawl they tied about and over his upper legs. What became of it?"

The Indian must have understood. For that day he went down to the branch, washed and dried the

big bright shawl and when mother was out cutting brush he spread it over the foot of the bed. And it was cheerful!

Papa said, "Why Margaret!"

"Hulings Miller, you are a magistrate, the judge of all this country, and here you put in nearly the whole day deciding between these Indians and never get a cent, did you?"

"Why Margaret, I never thought of that; guess you have a right to the shawl if you want it."

I think the Indian understood and was glad, for he got wood right along all winter and cut and burned more brush than any white man could have done. But in the spring when the sap began to run he ran with it and we never saw him any more.

There was talk all the time of the land coming into market. Plenty of adventurers who had been too late to get locations, were waiting to pounce on that of those unfortunate enough not to have money in hand to purchase. Papa had no money now, but he worked hard, night and day, you may say, all winter, and with the help of a neighbor had made a loom, a big spinning wheel and a little wheel for mother; the big wheel for wool, and the little foot wheel for flax. When the frost was out of the ground he plowed the little field and put it in corn and flax; mother and we lads made the garden.

A man by the name of Lorenzo Jacobs began to build a mill on our side of the Massassinewa, "the beautiful river," about a mile off, and there papa got work at 50 cents a day, boarding at home, but having his dinner with the mill hands. He was paid every Saturday night.

Mother, the first Saturday night, got an old mitten she had knit for him when we were making sugar,

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and sewed up the holes and put the three silver dollars in it, saying as she shook it down, "Nest egg to buy the land."

Each head of a family could locate 160 acres of land. The price was \$1.25 an acre. But the land laws were primitive and pretty severe in these early days and you must not only have the money in hand at the time the land came into market, but you must have two reliable witnesses to "prove up"—that is, to prove that you had built a house and made a home in it for more than a year. As there was a feeling against greased paper for windows, you were required to prove that you had glass in the windows.

When papa stopped working at the mill, after about four months, he went to Marion, the county seat of our Grant county, and got some panes of glass. At the same time he got two little dry goods boxes and from one of these whittled out a sash. One day a good-natured old neighbor from Tennessee, by the name of Billy Fields, seeing papa whittling away at his sash, said:

"All nonsense, Squire, all a waste of time."

"But the law says we must have glass in the windows."

"Well, what's the matter with setting an old bottle or two in your window; plenty of men to swear you have got glass in your window."

The last winter had been a hard one and packs of big gray wolves had crossed the ice and come down from the north into our neighborhood. As the Indians did not hunt much any more, having plenty of money, the wolves became bold, even dangerous. One night as papa was coming home they got after him. We boys, who had gone to meet him as usual,

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heard him calling for mother, and we took up the cry of terror. Mother came almost at once with a big hickory bark torch, held high as she ran, and the wolves shrank back. But poor papa was sadly broken and was ill for a long time.

He was well enough pretty soon, however, to pull and cure the flax and help pick and comb the wool for mother to card into rolls and spin for her loom. The wool in those days was awful. Burs and beggar lice stuck to the sheep that ran in the woods at will, till they were almost black. And this had to be picked out by hand. But we little fellows, all three, could pick wool now. And this we did by the light of the wood fire, where one little head after another nodded and nodded till it could hold up no longer, but sank to rest on the wool. Then some one would pick up the little sleeper and lay him gently away in the trundle bed. For we no longer slept in the big bed with our parents.

The flax was not so troublesome, nor do you have to plant it, and plough it, and hoe it, as you do corn. You have to pull it in due season, shake the earth from the roots and lay it in a swath in the sun and rain till the pith or stalk becomes brittle and shrinks loose from the fibre. Then you must break it in the flax brake, a handful at a time. Then you must hackle it on an iron hackle, so as to get the pith all out, then you must comb and curry it till it is ready for the distaff of the little spinning wheel. Mother had to have flax to make warp for the woof of her bolt of cloth to be made on the loom; then to be marketed at Marion, the only town then within many a mile.

Papa sold all the increase of the sheep and the two calves to the Indians and got some money for

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mother's "nest egg" that way and mother raised many chickens and disposed of the same to the tribe. Once, when we two boys went with papa, we took too much care of the poor hens, as the day was cold and raw, and smothered three of them. Papa did not count them, so the promised four dozen fell short. But the Indians counted the dead ones all the same, and paid for them. Still, for all that could be done, it seemed almost impossible to get all the money together for the land.

In this dilemma papa got a good old Irishman, who had a big family of boys, to take sixty acres and pay him \$50 for the privilege. This left us only 100 acres; but then it left only \$75 more to raise, and with what we had in hand, selling the pigs and mother's big bolt of cloth and so on, the money was all secured and he set out for Fort Wayne, the land office, with Billy Fields and Lorenzo Jacobs, who also had to "prove up," as witnesses, and so the land at last was secured.

Soon after this a big raw-boned man in a beaver hat, with a hatchet face, came to us by the way of the big State road not far away, with a load of clocks in a carriage. He had a big impertinent boy with him, and he pleaded sadly that both he and his boy were sick.

Mother was very good to them; pulled out the trundle bed to the middle of the floor, had us children get back in the foot of the bed as before, and treated them as if they had been her own blood.

But they both wailed and moaned bitterly, and begged papa to take the clocks, and at his leisure dispose of them to his neighbors. There was a whole carriage load of them, but in the double and treble assurance that he could double or treble his

money on them, my confiding papa, not knowing one thing about the real price or value of such wares, signed a note and once more became a "merchant."

Let me get rid of that hatchet-faced wretch right here, for, un-Christian as it is, I hate him yet. He came at the end of the year, exacting his money with enormous interest, although papa had not sold a single one of the old clocks. Jacobs came forward and took up the note generously, and tore it up, for mother was crying; but we were in debt again, and papa had to struggle on and teach and toil as before.

When we set out to cross the plains years later these old clocks, still on hand, all save a single one, took up more than half the wagon bed. We hauled them almost to the top of the Rocky mountains, and then one night in a terrific snowstorm, when the wagon upset and we needed the old clocks for kindling wood, they were, brass, glass, and varnish, all cremated: Peace to their sounding brass; rest to their brazen faces!

But to get back among the Indians of Indiana; papa had brought two little dry goods boxes from Marion. One he had made into window sash. We boys kept wondering what he was going to do with the other. He kept it in the smoke house, and once when we found him in there all alone, when he thought we were down at the creek catching crawfish, we found him busy in there fixing rockers on the little box. We were delighted with the idea, and, asking him what it was for, he timidly and with some confusion, said it was to be a cradle for little Jimmy.

But little Jimmy thrust both his hands in his pants pockets and said it was not big enough, and he added, with a pout, that baby Jimmy did not want to sleep in a cradle anyhow.

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A few days before this little rebellion by the baby boy in his first pantaloons, an honest man and a pretty young girl, really the prettiest woman I had ever seen except mother, came to papa to be married, and, as usual, where money was so scarce, brought two coon skins. And they were very fine skins, killed in the heart of winter and dressed to perfection. To dress or tan a coon skin properly you first par-flesh it with the back edge of your hunting-knife, then take the brains of the animal and, rubbing this on the flesh side, you manipulate the skin with your hands industriously, rubbing and rubbing for hours. This is, or was done, in those days at night by the cabin fire, after the day's work was done. It takes three operations to complete the task. But when it is done the skin shines and glistens as if oiled; and each particular bit of fur stands up as if alive.

Mother had claimed these two beautiful skins for some special purpose of her own and put them away under her pillow, where she always kept the money, when there was any money, and she now brought out the beautiful skins, which Jimmy had also admired very much and she put them carefully and tenderly in the cradle, smoothing them down with her hands and talking gently baby talk to baby Jimmy. But he again thrust his hands deep in his pockets and turning as if in disgust, stalked away to the door and went out. No cradle for Jimmy Miller. So mother took the coon skins out, for the time at least, and the cradle was put back again in the smoke house.

Soon after a good old Southern woman came from the Billy Fields settlement and sent us little folks away to Billy Fields and his house full of girls. And when the good old woman went away we were all back home and very, very happy. I led the horse

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that carried her and she sat up a straddle smoking a cob pipe and holding tight before her one of those clocks, the first and only one we ever disposed of. But let me tell the end of this chapter in verse. For there are things that are sacred from severe prose and a song suits better the theme. This is from *Harper's Magazine*:

WHEN LITTLE SISTER CAME

We dwelt in the woods of the Tippecanoe,
In a lone, lost cabin, with never a view
Of the full day's sun for a whole year through.
With strange half hints through the russet corn
We three were hurried one night. Next morn
There was frost on the trees, and a sprinkle of snow
And tracks on the ground. We burst through the
door,
And a girl baby cried—and then we were four.

We were not sturdy, and we were not wise,
In the things of the world, and the ways men dare;
A pale-browed mother with a prophet's eyes
A father that dreamed and looked anywhere.
Three brothers—wild blossoms, tall fashioned as
men
And we mingled with none, but we lived as when
The pair first lived, ere they knew the fall;
And loving all things we believed in all.

Chapter 3

FREMONT AND MY FIRST SHOES



ONE day papa, who always read to us spare times on Sunday and at night when there was no wool to pick, brought home a book from the Indian village which had been loaned to him by the agent, and began to read to us the explorations of Captain Fremont. I never was so fascinated. I never grew so fast in my life. Every scene and circumstance in the narrative was painted on my mind to last, and to last forever. Papa saw my intense interest in the story and would stop and explain to the three children at his knee and to mother, who sat busily knitting on the other side of the big bright fireplace, all the names and new things in the book, till the story glowed like the great log fire by which it was read. I liked the bit where Lieutenant Lee, afterward the famous Confederate General Lee—generously gave Fremont a little cannon, although against orders, for his three-thousand mile expedition. I fancied I could see Fremont's men hauling the cannon up the savage battlements of the Rocky mountains, flags in the air, Fremont at the head, waving his sword, his horse neighing wildly in the mountain wind, with unknown and unnamed empires on every hand. It touched my heart when he told how a weary little brown bee tried to make its way from a valley of flowers far below across a spur of snow, where he sat resting for a moment with his men; how the bee rested on his knee till it was strong enough to go on to another field of

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flowers beyond the snow; how he waited a bit for it to go at its will. I was no longer a boy, in truth, I had never been a boy, like other boys, had never had a ball, marble, top or toy of any sort, but now I began to be inflamed with a love for action, adventure, glory and great deeds away out yonder under the path of the setting sun. Mother, too, took in something of the same enthusiasm and once stopped papa to ask what we, the United States, would do with all this land; but he, with his continual sense of justice, quietly answered that the land belonged to the Indians.

When the frosts began to whiten the fences and the yellow leaves to fall in banks of gold, as if to pay Mother Earth in the richest currency that ever circulated for all the generosity of the passing year, when baby snows sifted down and made noiseless and velvet ways to walk upon, Billy Fields, the shoemaker of the settlement, came to us with a corn cob pipe in his teeth and a flat little board under his arm. I was to be measured for my first pair of shoes!

I had never, as yet, been a robust boy, as my brothers were. I had never, as yet, been able to eat meat. Mother had always contrived to provide me with a bowl of milk, and this with a spoon and a big piece of corn bread, eaten alone in a fence corner or under a tree, wherever I could get away by myself, was my chief and highest relish. And so it was that I was to have the first pair of shoes of the three little boys. Papa had carried me on his back to the school in the sugar camp country, but now little Jimmy must be carried to school. My sedate black-haired and manly big brother, John D.—all the Witts, or the De Witts, had a “D” in the family

as a substitute for the De, which had been rubbed off, as being too foreign, like the date and name of an old English shilling—the generous older brother John D. cheerfully deferred to me because I was not so strong and was the first to insist that I, instead of himself, as was his right, should have the first pair of shoes, he would gladly continue to wear moccasins or go barefoot.

This winter papa had a new school, away over on Pipe creek. We three boys all went to this school from the very first day, I in my new shoes, and they hurt like sixty; John D. in moccasins of undressed deer skin, the hairy side out, and Jimmy on papa's back. We crossed a great bridge of many spans, the first I had ever seen, a marvel of tremendous construction to me and a torment every time I passed over it in my hard and heavy new shoes.

We had a big hewed log school house with a big fireplace at either end. For the puncheon-floored room was full, girls and boys, big and little, white, brown, and black.

And papa had better, even big pay here, for the first inflowing tide of civilization had touched us at last, and the motley and packed school was paid for, in part, at least, by either the State or county, I do not know which. It was all one to me at the time. I was only concerned that papa had good pay so that we might get on and out the way Fremont had explored. It was a noisy but happy school; and I was as happy as the happiest.

That crowded school was a continual source of instruction and delight to me. The big boys and big girls would stand up and read paragraph after paragraph, each one with face intently to the same book, while they alternately read aloud, and I

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followed all with intense attention, and learned by heart much of the second and third readers before I had yet had either of them in my possession. And then there was the spelling class! Oh, that spelling class, when everyone big enough to stand in line left the book on the long wooden bench and took the last lesson of the day. But while very intent and industrious I never could learn to spell, except in the "simplified" way; although John D., only half as tall as some of the big boys, often stood at the head of that long and turbulent class. Friday afternoon we always gave over to spelling. Papa would appoint the leaders and they would "choose up"—that is, they would take the broom, toss it up, catching hold low down on the handle, and then hand-over-hand they would each lay hold, and the last one to hold the broom handle had first choice. With what exultation I often saw little brother John D. chosen first of all! These leaders would so arrange the long benches that they sat on either side of the house at the head of their following, each one taking such as chosen till the last of the school, even to little Jimmy, who was learning his A, B, C's, was chosen to sit in line. Then papa would stand in the middle with his back to a fireplace and "pronounce." All was life, subdued laughter and merry banter and challenge at these "Friday spellin's," and many funny things happened. Titter was almost continual.

Sometimes the laugh turned on papa. The little ones, as said before, were also chosen. I cannot see that this was to help them spell or learn anything. But they were made to believe that it was a great favor and a grave dignity conferred on them. The A, B, C fell to the lot of the last and least of the

tots. This took some time, of course, but the longer it lasted the better the big children liked it. For papa's back had to be turned while he tried to teach the little ones. And at such times the big ones made eyes, innocent signs of undying love, and often nearly exploded with laughter. Little Jimmy, like myself, was dull and indifferent, even impatient with the discipline of books, and learned his alphabet tardily. Once it came his turn to pronounce the letter "G" in its order from A to Z, but he could not or would not think of it. At last papa, out of patience, said sharply: "Well, Jimmy, what do I say to the horse when he does not go right in the field? Say, what I say to the horse?" Then Jimmy in his sharp, piping voice, answered quick and sharply: "You say, 'Did up, dod on you!'"

The explosion in the rear was terrible. Papa was red in the face, but turning about looked good-naturedly at the roaring rows of big boys and said: "Boys and girls, please be good. Listen to me. I promised you a big barrel of red apples at Christmas. But I have been thinking lately, as the school is so big and you all have been so good and so kind and so studious that you shall have two big barrels of red apples! School is dismissed."

Soon after Christmas a young man brought a bright, rosy-faced girl to get married. You needed no license in those days, or anything else to speak of, except the girl, to get married. When they had been made man and wife, with mother and Russell Fields for witnesses, the young man blushed and fumbled in his pockets and finally said: "I left my money in the other pants, squire."

The pretty girl looked her young husband hard in the face, then burst into tears. Mother took her out

to the smokehouse to show her a setting hen and talk her away from her tears. Then the man said: "Squire, I have renigged. I renigged because I had no trump, lied because I could not tell the truth. I have nothing in the world but my ax, but I know how to use it and will work it out."

"Go get your ax! Leave your wife here to help mother take care of the baby; you better go to school with me, can chop morning and evening and Saturdays. If you are good we will see what can be done in the spring."

The young couple were very grateful. The young husband went to school and worked hard. Mother fixed up the smokehouse for them with the bed the beastly old clock peddler and his boy had used, and they were both as good as could be. Jacobs gave them both work in the spring and they turned out to be first-class people.

Papa taught a spring term also this time for he wanted the money to go to Oregon. There was but one idea in our happy little household and that idea was Oregon. Senator Linn of Missouri, colleague with the great Benton, whose daughter Jessie, Captain Fremont had married on his return, had introduced a bill giving each settler with a family a full section of land in that far off and most fertile spot in the world and—well, just think of it! Six hundred and forty acres ready for the plow, and only for measuring it off!

Why, how hard and long we had worked to get a single one hundred acres, and all of it brush and mud and malaria!

Who would not want to go to Oregon?

Besides that General Joe Lane, who had gone to school to papa in the sugar camps and then to

Congress, then to the Mexican War, had been appointed governor of Oregon. All things seemed to point in our favor and to Oregon!

Papa set about to sell the few sheep, the land—everything we did not need—to go to Oregon, and the table was spread with many maps, and Fremont's travels were read and reread continually by the tallow dip till the night oftentime was far spent. But the winter had been a hard one; all the sheep were out in the woods. One night they did not come up as usual, and we found them next morning, all dead, their throats cut, as if some dogs or wild beasts, had killed them, only to suck their blood. The kind and sympathetic Indian agent came over on hearing of this and told papa he believed that the dogs of the Indians, very numerous and of predatory habits, had killed his sheep. But papa insisted it was the big gray wolves that he had encountered the year or so before. For how could the dogs get across the river? But the agent, hearing what papa had asked for his sheep, went back and laid the case before Shingle-Mas-See, and promptly he came over with the cash. Papa at first refused to take it. Then he consented to take half of it. The good old savage laughed at him, called him a foolish little squaw, and then went and counted all the money down to mother.

Let me digress to tell you of this man who gave us the first idea of Oregon, and stood by us so finely. His name was McCullough. He became famous for his many generous deeds, grew very rich, with banks even in Europe, and was made a Cabinet minister under President Grant—Secretary of the Treasury. When I found him in London, long, long years after, and told him how papa revered

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him and talked over the old friends, red and white, he was very, very glad and made me promise that if I ever needed money to be sure and let him know. But I never saw him any more, and have set down this paragraph only to show that they are, or were, not only good Indians, but good agents also.

The farm was sold to a German family, lately landed, for a good round sum; mother, as usual, taking charge of the money, only now, although there were many pieces of gold—each piece wrapped up carefully by itself in tissue paper—it took two old mittens to hold it all. We pushed out with but one span of horses toward Chicago, intending to winter there and equip other teams at that point, and possibly dispose of those old clocks; for the false mahogany was peeling off and they had begun to look very shabby.

At Rochester, a town near Tippecanoe river, we heard a tale of butchery that made the blood stand still. The intrepid teacher and missionary, Dr. Marcus P. Whitman, his wife and all his little colony had been butchered by Indians, led by Canada Joe, a cruel and foolish Catholic half-breed.

The British had been claiming Oregon and this fearless missionary, Whitman, had in midwinter mounted his horse, and clad in buckskin and all alone most of the way, reached Washington and declared to Congress that the one and only peaceable and certain way to hold Oregon was to send there a train of a thousand wagons filled with settlers.

He was encouraged, led a long train, the first across the plains from the Mississippi to Walla Walla on the Columbia, and was going ahead finely with his vast enterprise, when the Indians suddenly

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rose up, killed him and his brave young wife with all their house, except one little girl, who got away, was helped along with a few others by good Indians further down the river and finally got to Oregon City. It is a long story, but not quite out of line with this family tale; for this little girl grew up, was married, had a little girl who grew to womanhood and then became the wife of my little yellow-headed Jimmy, who had refused to sleep in the new, coonskin cradle. They have nine beautiful children, and their boys are not only boys, but men, manly and dutiful young men.



Chapter 4

PAPA TAKES US TO THE CIRCUS



WHILE awaiting a favorable opportunity to start for Oregon, papa found a place further up the storied Tippecanoe river, about five miles from Rochester, and arranged to teach there the coming winter. But before going there he put us all in the wagon and went down the river near to where it flows into the Wabash, to see the old battle ground, where Harrison had so stubbornly held his own during the bloody night attack by the brother of Tecumseh. He was moved to do this out of respect for his father, who had fought here and who had fallen under the same intrepid soldier on the banks of the Maumee, at old Fort Meigs. We camped here on the battle ground for many days, and papa led us all around by day and told us all the pitiful story of the pioneers, their hardy and honest lives and unselfish devotion to duty. He took great pride in telling about the Kentucky men with their long flint-lock squirrel guns, for his father had been one of them.

The trees were many and mostly oak on this high head bank, where the struggle had been hardest, and all seemed to be badly scarred. But the scars were not so big and so ugly from the bullets as from the tomahawks of hunters, and perhaps Indians also, hacking into the trees to find old bullets of the battle to melt over and again mold into bullets. It was autumn and the trees were red, so very richly

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red, as if the woods had been enriched by the blood shed there, as if the leaves had taken on a deeper hue from the blood of the great forgotten dead.

Going from the battle ground up the river to the little farm of eighty acres, which papa had bought, we found two fairly good cabins and all the ground under fence. The man who sold it was to remain in the older cabin while we took charge of the new one and at once set out for school. Some of the neighbors were Yankees, some German emigrants, but some of them were "poor white trash" from down South, dreadfully given to drinking and fist fighting. These fist fights were mostly on muster days, at log rollings, or house raisings, where all the neighborhood, good and bad, met together and whisky seemed to be almost the only sort of provisions.

The school house was a most humble affair of unhewn logs, a mile away through deep woods, and greatly overcrowded.

Papa got on well with the scholars, big and little, and soon found two good big boys who were anxious to work for their board nights and mornings and Saturdays and go to school at the same time—quite a custom in these early days. And it may as well be noted here as elsewhere that this sort of student as a rule made up the Lincolns, Garfields, and Lanes of the great Middle West.

Papa was making every preparation possible for a big crop of corn. For the first time in the history of the West there was to be a way to reach points of transportation to the East. The southern end of Indiana had always had an outlet by way of the rivers away down to New Orleans, but now a canal had at last been cut making some sort of

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connection by way of the lakes with New York, where there was a stable market.

And a plank road (toll) had been made from Rochester, only a few miles from us, to the city of Logansport, on the canal, where a certain price, fabulously low of course, was established for all the corn that could reach this point. We must take advantage of this first market in the country, and so kept hard at work, all of us except the little baby girl, who was still in Jimmy's cradle, from daybreak till dusk made it impossible to toil later.

When school was ended the two young men still stayed with us, mother not at all complaining of the extra work, but up every morning long before dawn preparing fragrant breakfasts of ham and eggs and fried chicken, all by the light of her dim tallow dip.

One pretty spring morning when the boys were plowing, a tall dark man in buckskins came where papa and I were splitting rails, and setting the butt of his long rifle heavily on the ground and throwing his big right fist away toward the West with a sweep, shouted out, "Gold! Gold! Gold! Squire, they have found gold by the wagon load in Californy; by the cart load, by gum! The ground is full of gold in Californy, an' I'm a goin' to Californy!"

He hastened on to where the boys were plowing and followed them up in the furrow, talking and gesticulating wildly as he went. At dinner we could talk, think, eat, nothing but "Californy."

Yes, the young men would go with us. We would go to Oregon, for the section of land was sacred with us all, but the boys would leave us at the forks of the road and go right on, get loads of

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gold, come then to us in Oregon, "and let Californy go to the bow-wows!"

That night Fremont's maps were gone over again, more carefully than ever; all the maps were out on the table, and tallow dips were burned to the socket before even little yellow and frouzy headed Jimmy began to nod his manly little head!

We would set out next March, a good month, a name with a good meaning, for 3,000 miles of marching by mountain and plain, wood and water, desert and dust, and we went to bed literally filled with glittering "Californy."

Ten months more and we must be on our way. And how the work went on. Corn was planted, hoed, hilled up and plowed deep! How beautifully and healthy and proudly it waved its lifted sabres in the sun, a sea of glistening emerald!

About midsummer Washington Harrison Peterson, a tall Kentucky boy who had been at school, came to see us and brought a big and wondrous poster of pictures which he had found on the door of the now vacant school house. Elephants, snakes, monkeys, men standing on their heads, bearded women swallowing big long butcher knives. There was going to be a circus in Rochester!

Papa and mother talked it over that night, while Washington Harrison Peterson, who had seen a circus, or said he had, dilated on the notable beauty of the bearded woman, the wondrous celerity of the elephant, and the beautiful and alert boaconstrictor as it ate apples ravenously out of a naked man's hand in the Garden of Eden, and it was unanimously agreed, all the three boys voting in the affirmative, that papa and his lads should go to that astounding circus. Yes, papa would take

Washington Harrison Peterson along as a reward for his pointing out so perfectly and entertainingly the moral, ethical, and educational advantages of the coming circus. We would take a wagon load of water melons along, sell them on the streets, get money to buy the tickets, and so be none the poorer but vastly wiser for the day's work and delight.

I remember papa saying to mother as he covered up the fire for the night: "Yes, Margaret, I think it is better that the boys should see the circus; for, of course, they will never have a circus in Oregon or California, and this will be something they ought to see here while they can. It will be a sort of education for them, and they will remember it all their lives."

The days, the great big hot and dry midsummer days, busy as they every one were, dragged by slowly, but at last the great circus day came. With the wagon bed nearly full of melons and papa and his boys in one seat, we set out for Rochester. All the neighbors of all the country round about were going our way. Jimmy remarked with a business whisper that none of the wagons but our own had water melons. "I hope you won't try to be a merchant Jimmy; get up there, Sorrel."

The dread of papa's life was that we boys should try to be merchants. When we came to the big State road, on the bank of the river a mile or so from town, we found quite a multitude waiting there to see if the circus would go over the high bridge or ford the stream. As the band at the head came on it struck up a lively air and led through the water. The circus followed, not daring to risk the elephants, the wonderfully painted wagons and the beautiful bearded lady on the shaky wooden

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bridge. Papa pushed on soon after alongside of the elephants that took to the water with a roar. The big and noisy beasts stopped in the middle of the deep stream and began to suck in and spurt water all over their backs and sides and saucily throw little streams of it over all who were near them. This made everybody shout and roar, and the elephants seemed to enjoy it to the full. Jimmy said he could see them laugh. But Jimmy always had a good and lively imagination.

At last the big elephant with a man on its neck tried to lay down and the man with an iron hook had to prod and shout and yell desperately before he could make it stand up and move on. Then the band struck up loud and shrill, and the wonderful caravan, half a mile long it seemed to me, moved on to the stirring drums and horns and pipes till we entered the city of Rochester, where the thousands of boys shouted their wonder, admiration, and exultation. I even saw some of them turn hand springs and try to stand on their heads.

We boys had painted some signs on boards with red poke berries, reading, "Ripe melons, melons fip and a bit! Melons six pence apiece." That is melons a five-penny bit. Melons a half shilling or six pennies. Melons a picayune or melons, a little one. This last to suit the Southerner. We took out the tail board of the wagon and handed out melons as fast as they were wanted, and that was about as fast as we could hand them out. Papa went down town and on coming back in a brief time he looked on and said: "Going like hot cakes, eh? How much money have you made? Enough for us all five to go in?"

"Yes, and more, too, papa. Just count it up."

And so he took the money, counted it up and said, "Good! Now, give away all the rest and let's go!"

He again seemed, even more, dreadfully afraid we might want to be merchants, and unhooking the horses he brought them around to the tail of the wagon, emptied out a dozen ears of yellow corn, and taking off the bridles we were away like birds for the big tent.

What a whirl! What a rush and roar! The shrill music, melody surely, over and above all the clamor! And how the tumblers tumbled, the spotted horses circled and the painted clown kept the center, and the impressive ring master cracked his whip savagely around and over all things.

I had never dreamed that there was anything waiting along the road of my coming years so grand and so all glorious as this! How we did talk to mother and sister that night!

I nearly broke my neck the very next day after we got home trying to ride the old plow horse, head down, and had to go to bed for a week. But that did not dull my enthusiasm. I talked circus right along, so did John D., so did Jimmy, for days and days, till at last papa gently protested, said that mother and baby sister already had heard it all over a dozen times and that we must now take up our reading again and get ready for the wonderful things we were to see on the way to Oregon.

May I take time to stick a pin here and assert with my hand on my heart that that circus was really great. At least, it has ever stood out and up and over all things in my mind as the most splendid thing ever seen, until we set out for Oregon. I have had many chances in my busy life to attend

other circuses, both in the old world and in the new, but I have never yet been willing to mar the memories of that first one by trying to see a second. And I want to leave this idea with you. Let your boy go to a circus—just one good circus—and then stop for all time. The clock strikes 12 only once a day. When the two hands are pointing heavenward together and you have seen the greatest and the best, be contented, for the sun is setting to the west from that moment. I am glad as I can be that I saw that circus by the Wabash waters, but most particularly glad I never tried to see another.

When the emerald seas of corn grew golden under the first frosts, the young men, papa, mother, and we three little boys, baby sitting in the wagon, husked out the big yellow ears and carried load after load to the cribs till the generous harvest was all gathered; a tremendous crop! Then the two young men, on the second day, "came down with the ague"; then papa, then mother. Do you know what it is to shake and to shiver, and to burn up with fever and cry aloud for water, and not be able to drink when it is brought you? Can you imagine how terrible you feel when you are shivering and freezing to the bone, and are only the more fearfully chill as you sit by the fire or in the sun? That is the Indiana ague, the miserable fever and ague as it was in the old days on the waters on the Wabash.

Earth resents familiarity. We had turned up too much fresh and fever-laden soil. Besides, we—at least our parents and the two young men—had toiled too hard.

With all of them down on their backs, John D. and I loaded the wagon and drove away on over the

plank road to Logansport. The wagonbed was so big and we were so small that, in coming home, we had to stand up all the way, so as to look ahead and see the horses. But we got home, and, oh, the glory of laying the big silver dollars in mother's hand, and of hearing poor, shivering papa count it and clink it over and over, as his teeth chattered and chattered. They must have spent an anxious two days, for they were worse than ever. But now their blood came back, and with a flow so warm that they soon shook only every other day, and then, at last, only every third day, and then, on our final safe return, not at all.

Jimmy went with us that last time, and as we had to come home very late we got rained on in the dark, and the next day or so we were all three down flat on our backs, with the burning fever and bone-breaking chills. Jimmy, who had nearly frozen that last night as we bigger boys stood up and he lay asleep on the empty bags, shaking the worst of all three.

However, the young men were up and about soon, and so the team kept going till all the big cribs of corn were empty and the two old mittens were once more full of money, and papa began to buy oxen, cows and wagon for the wondrous journey ahead of us. The cows had to be yoked alongside of oxen. It would not do to try driving loose stock. We got another wagon, a carriage for mother, and, having sold the farm back to the same man, a Mr. Culver, from whom we had bought it, we were promptly ready for the long march as it had been planned for nearly a year before.

The exact day of our starting, with all the neighbors for miles around to see, was by chance the

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sacred 17th day of March. I had insisted on having a gun. Papa gave a reluctant consent, but got me an old smooth-bore flintlock, with no flints, till I made one out of an arrowhead. And somehow this would get loose and get lost nearly all the time.

The young men who were with us did not want me to have a gun, and at this remote day with my better knowledge of the world and ways of human nature, I think I begin to guess pretty clearly what became of my flints.

It may seem strange that papa so disliked guns, since he had been nearly all his life in the wilderness, and was now pushing away into the very heart of a land of wild beasts and wilder men. But he would not touch a gun. And during all his seventy-two years in the border he never knew how to load a gun. Please do not call him eccentric. I despise the too frequent use of the term eccentric. I should say that as his father had been killed when he was yet a babe at the breast that he somehow sucked in the terror and hate of all violence with his weeping mother's milk, sucked in maybe milk and tears together.

Well, we were off and away now. The Rubicon was behind us.

And have I bothered and wearied you with a story of trifles, details of toil, trials, and baby brothers of men? So let it be. What is writ is writ. But if you do not love, pity, cherish, and revere the memories of these mighty men of these once densely wooded States, Ohio and Indiana, these pawpaw fastnesses, these maple wood empires that gave us mothers in Israel who suckled prophets, sages, soldiers, Presidents—then please follow no

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further. But I say to you that there is nothing in the pages of history so glorious, so entirely grand, as the lives of these noble Spartan fathers and mothers of Americans, who begot and brought forth and bred the splendid giants of the generation that is now fast following the setting sun of their unselfish and all immortal lives.



Chapter 5

CROSSING THE PLAINS

Yonder in the west lies the East;
Yonder reaches the road to India.



THE distance, counting the contours of often roundabout ways, was quite, or nearly, three thousand miles. The time was seven months and five days. There were no bridges, no railroad levels, nothing of the sort. We had only the road as nature had made it. Many times, at night, after ascending a stream to find a ford we could look back and see our smouldering camp fires of the day before.

We found the roads hard frozen on setting out in March from the headwaters of the Wabash and the road good at first. We camped at night with settlers and fed our stock well. We also took care that we should be in the best of strength and heart, as well as the stock.

Lewis and Clark nearly fifty years before had set down the Territories of Illinois and Iowa as all under water and worthless. Later information dispelled this idea largely, but still papa was afraid of mud and mire as the spring advanced and kept well off to the left; pointing as direct as the woods and waters would allow for St. Joe on the Missouri as a source of supplies for the long, long journey across the entirely unpeopled plains.

We found St. Joe, after nearly two months'

steady tramp and solid tread of the honest old oxen, a sea of tents. For miles and miles up the Missouri and down was to be seen the white tents, white covered wagons and busy people passing and surging to and fro.

On the 15th of May, 1852, we, ten miles above St. Joe to avoid the multitude and inevitable mud, crossed the Missouri into the vast wilderness and the extraordinary march was commenced. The sun-down seas were before us, civilization, such as we had known, and all sorts, lay behind us. There could be for us, no turning back. We were not of that material.

We had two big heavily laden wagons, with eight yoke of oxen to each, a carriage and two horses for mother and baby sister, and a single horse for the three boys to ride. This was particularly convenient, especially at the crossing of swollen streams, when all three could climb on together and get lots of fun and oftentimes a little wetting; for we all had learned to swim in the dear old Tippecanoe, and we did not mind it a bit if we all rolled off together in the middle of the stream. Papa had hired two teamsters to come with us and haul corn for the stock, although we found grass brisket deep and wild flowers to the waist; a perfect sea of yellow flowers, and pink and white and purple. The Indians were very decent, tall, fine fellows; they stood by or sat their ponies in line and marveled at the continuous stream of people; the innumerable multitude. How feeble and indifferent was our Government fifty or sixty years ago! No sort of assistance or suggestion or information of any sort to this tumultuous mass of world builders. No statistics. No attempt to enumerate them. Why,

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they were civilized in Egypt in the days of Exodus. Moses would have made a much better President than the ones we then had, in the early fifties.

The proud and erect Indian men would refuse all presents, but the Indian women, with their babes at back refused nothing, although they did not beg at all as they do now. They were very fond of the white children and all the time wanted to touch and fondle them. Mother seemed afraid they would steal her little girl. She, in her eagerness to learn about the land we were about to traverse, had read a yellow book telling all about how Indians would steal little girls! The Indian women were all the time trying to lay their hands on my little brother Jimmy's great shock of frouzy yellow hair, but he would run away from them and hide under the wagons.

We began to meet people in wagons, but thought they were helpers who had gone on with corn for stock. However, soon we began to come upon new-made graves by the streams and at camping places. Then the graves were many. The cholera had broken out and hundreds were dying and thousands turning back!

I remember reading years after a pretty little sentimental tale about how that when an engineer of the first Pacific railroad on suddenly discovering a grave in the long grass before him tenderly turned aside and changed the course of the track out of respect for this pioneer who fell in the conquest of the West. No such folly. No such sentimental nonsense ever entered the head of any real railroad man. The cold fact is the new-made graves of that sad and desperate cholera year, 1852, far outnumbered the railroad ties of that first railroad.

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In the midst of all this turning back, this despair and death, our parents kept steadily on, making slow marches, keeping in good heart, and as a consequence in good health. Papa would stop on Sundays and hold, in a very quiet way, some sort of service. Sometimes a preacher would come into what came to be known as the "Sunday tent," but papa did not like long sermons, and rarely asked anyone to preach lest he might preach too much.

One night on the Platte river a cyclone came and took the tent from over our heads, and had papa and the men not hastened to tie the three vehicles together with big ox chains they would have gone with the tent. Then rain in torrents, and we all got under the wagons. We had driven the cattle out on a wooded island in the river and had no fear for them. But soon there was a shout, and then a cry of despair from the deep ravine near us. The flood was sweeping the tents, wagons, women, and children all before it. When morning came there was not a vestige of life left, only a few overturned wagons half hidden in the sand. Even the oxen were gone. I heard men tell that on the other side of the Platte river a big train, that had camped in a ravine, had been utterly crushed by a mass of maddened buffalo during that tornado. But I did not see this. Besides it is too terrible to tell in detail.

As we neared the summit of the Rocky mountains another sudden cyclone struck us, but this was in open day and not so terrible. We had camped on a rocky ridge and had only then gotten the cattle down to water and grass when the cyclone took us in a whirl! Papa and the men got the carriage chained to the big wagon in time, but the lighter

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wagon, with its load of Connecticut clocks, went over the cliff with a crash. We all held on to the wheels of the big wagon and the wind went, sudden as it came, taking only our last tent and nearly every hat.

The next camp was in the South Pass, so named by Fremont, who had set up a cairn of stones here: the summit of the Rocky mountains. The flying snow fell in our faces as we looked away toward the West. The waters were flowing toward the setting sun. It seemed to us all, weary as we were, that the rest of the way must be down hill to the vast ocean. Our camp was by the Pacific Springs. We were now drinking of the waters that flowed to the mighty ocean! What exultation! What glory and achievement!

At Salt Lake, a beautiful city and scene of honest industry, we rested long, sold some worn-out cattle, the carriage and the two horses; keeping one for mother and baby. We three little fellows had learned to walk well; and walk we did now all the time; all but Jimmy, who had to sleep some each day in the wagon. We, joined with others, built a raft of dead cottonwood logs and crossed cold, swift, Green river on a raft.

The night before descending the steep to this river we were camped in the Subletts cut-off, from which place the mountain scene is one of the most splendid in all the Rocky mountains, East or West. As we were about to move a wild band of mounted Indians, that I have since learned were outlaws or robbers, circled about us, and were fired upon by those who had joined papa for the purpose of building the raft. Their chief, a splendid warrior in long black hair and gaudy dress, fell from his saddle. A

little battle followed. I got behind a wagon with my gun, and drew bead upon the nearest Indian, but as usual found there was no flint in the lock of my gun. The boys afterward said that while I had no flint I had plenty of sand; that even the barrel of my gun was full of it.

Our side as well as the Indians suffered. All were buried in one grave, and we continued on. We had no water at all now. For this cut-off is through a desert. Our course was sharp to the right, close under the Fremont mountains, after crossing the turbulent and beautiful river, where one of our party, who had been to California, picked up bits of gold in the sand. It has all been mined since—and we soon made the head waters of the Sho-sho-nee river. It is now called the Snake river. This Indian name means "snake in the grass." There was an old fort, Fort Hall. The cholera was bad here. Men, women, and children dying from drinking the cold, clear waters of the springs that bubbled up from the melting snows of the shining Fremont mountains.

The days flitted on and we were out of the desert, but not out of trouble.

About this time a very serious thing happened. A Mr. Wagoner had a beautiful girl in his large family, and a friendly Indian chief who rode a fine spotted horse asked Mr. Wagoner what he would take for her. The Indian was told in jest that he would take ten beautiful spotted horses, like the one he rode.

The Indian dashed off and the same day overtook us with the ten horses and a horde of warriors, and wanted the girl. Of course, everybody protested, but the chief would not be put off. The Oregonians

that had been sent out to meet us were appealed to. It was a very serious matter, they said.

The chief was an honest man and meant exactly what he said, and had a right to the girl. The majority agreed, and thought the best way out of it was to let papa marry them. This seems strange now, but it was the Indian custom to buy wives, and as we were in the heart of a warlike people, we could not safely trifle with the chief.

The girl was about to throw herself in the river from the steep bluff where we were, at which the chief, seeing her terror, relented, and led his warriors off, scornfully refusing what presents were offered him for his forbearance.

At the Dalles, about forty days further on, papa went to see the officer in command of this military post, the first one we had found, to ask about the possibility of crossing the Cascade mountains, or rather, the Sierra Grande del Nord, at that late season of the year. This kind officer sent a yoke of strong, fat oxen and two soldiers to see us to the summit. His name, we were told, years later, was Grant—Capt. U. S. Grant, afterward President. By taking this route papa landed his little family far up the Willamette river almost in the heart of the wonderful valley. This is the most poetic, gorgeous, and glorious valley in flowers and girdle of snow-crowned mountains on the globe.

Papa, as a teacher, had always been rather fastidious in his dress, and mother often told me that he always wore broadcloth with a flower in his buttonhole when he lived near Cincinnati, in reach of a tailor. And I well remember he always wore a leaf or flower in his lapel when teaching school, no matter what the quality of his coat. But here

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in Oregon, in this mild climate, seeing we were nearly all naked, he said to mother one morning as he pinned a flower in his shirt bosom:

"Margaret, really and truly, we don't need any clothes in this country, except it may be some sort of a thing to pin a flower on."

In this happy frame of mind papa soon after cut a stick and, taking a small pack on his back, set out up the vast and fertile valley to find a location, a "claim." He left us under the care of a noble old missionary, E. E. Parrish, and also a Methodist preacher by the name of West. It seemed that everyone of the older immigrants were either missionaries or preachers. And they were all good, God-fearing men, who did all they could to encourage and care for the stranger. We three boys, nine, eleven, and thirteen years of age, soon found work in clearing off brush and making rails for a neighbor close at hand. Mother would go out to work with us, sitting on a stump and knitting and talking cheerily to us when not herself at work.

We earned a cow in this way, and mother bought two others, giving a note bearing enormous interest. The cows cost \$100 each. So that when papa got back after a long quest far up the valley we had three more cows, three frisky little calves, and lots of butter to sell. Two little Jew peddlers, brothers, who had some way got down by way of what is now Alaska from Russia, came by every week and got the butter and gave in exchange groceries and dry goods. The merchants in those days demanded more than double the purchase price of everything; but as they paid \$1 a pound for butter, which was twice what it was really worth, the thing was about even. These Jew boys carried everything on their

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backs at first. Then they got a horse, then a wagon, then they opened a store away up at the forks of the river, where papa had found a "claim," and flourished amazingly. Then they had a big store in the biggest city; then a bank in San Francisco. And open-handed papa marveled to the end of his days, why he, too, could not have been such a "merchant."

It was a muddy, mirey road away up to the Willamette Forks, neighbors forty miles distant from one another in places and no bridges, and few ferries across the swift, deep river; but we got there at last and the spare neighbors, as was the custom, came to the "raising," and in a few days we had a home, a house, such as it was; let us call it a palace. For never was nobleman of high degree, with all his house, so happy in his castle, as was proud, brave, dear papa.

The law had been meanly changed while we were en route, cutting down the donation from 640 acres to one-half, so that the ranch was not what it should have been in area, and real value; but no one complained, and all went to work and worked from sun to sun, happy, healthy, and gaining in strength every day. The land, unfortunately, was not well chosen. We should have located in the middle of the valley and where every foot was fertile and tillable, but we had been used to woods and did not like the open. We wanted the wood for houses, fences, and the fireplace. In the rear a great mountain, topped with wonderful fir trees, gloried in the morning sun; the swift, sweet river glistened under the great big cedars and balm trees away out yonder in the boundless dooryard, where the cattle fed and fattened, and all was well.

Papa at first took us up the mountainside to cut

down trees, cut off logs, and roll them down for rails. These rolling, tumbling, headlong logs on the steep hillsides made great sport for our little dog. But he got caught under one and was killed. Then Jimmy got caught under one. And, although he got up and laughed at our terror and dismay, papa gave up the mountain, and we made rails after that from ash, maple, balm, alder, and so on, to fence our first field; worthless wood, compared to the beautiful fir, but we boys were too bold and venturesome to be left alone to wrestle with the tumbling rail cuts. For papa again was going to teach school, miles away.

He plowed and put in flax, corn, and a garden, even before we had a fence. As the fence around the house was finished, we put in an orchard, papa going far distant and bringing the trees home on his back. When we got the trees in the ground, a corral for the cattle, and when the corn and flax and all sort of things began to grow and glory in their existence, mother looked on, and said: "I tell you, boys, things are just a-humming!"



Chapter 6

MY FIRST DOLLAR—CALIFORNIA



IHAD kept a crude sort of journal, and as papa had stored in his mind every single camp and all incidents of account in all that seven months of persistent march we went over it together and filled up the broken and disconnected places. He insisted that it would be of interest some day. But it was burned with the house and all its contents some years later. I see that my birthday is set down in some books for 1841, and in others for 1842. This comes from the loss of the Bible. For when I was first in Europe and some began to ask when I was born, papa gave the former year, according to his recollection of the trivial event, while mother insisted on the latter, both giving the same day of the month.

We got some sheep to keep on the shares, and Jimmy, with his new dog, kept with them all the time, but the saucy little coyotes would just sit down round about and watch and wait for the lambs, and get them almost as fast as they came. Once he heard a lamb bleating piteously away up overhead in the bright blue sky, and lifting his eyes he saw a great black-winged eagle making its way to the mountain top with a little white lamb in its clutches. The old primal contention of nature was still with us, even in happy, peaceful, and prolific Oregon—the survival of the fittest—fightest!

We two bigger boys wrought out in the fields, milked the cows night and morning. Mother made

the butter. Papa walked to and from his school, far away in the Forks.

About this time our nearest neighbor, a learned, good man, candidate for governor, and afterward famous for classification of the Oregon grasses, nearly 200 in number, wanted to break up a field and turn under the dense growth of wild roses that was overrunning his ranch. He wanted me to drive the oxen while he held the plow. Wild with joy I was with him early and we wrought late and long. I was barefooted and my tattered trousers reached not far below the knees and the oxen were wilful and unruly; but we stuck to it, breaking the ground matted with rose roots. I was at the same time breaking and subduing the obstinate oxen and I did not note or care for my feet or legs. We did not stop for lunch and when we got up to the house and watered and unyoked the oxen my legs began to smart and my feet to hurt me so much that I begged not to stay for supper, as I wanted to go home. But he looked up and told me I had done finely with the oxen, thanked me kindly, asked me to come early next morning and then putting his hand in his pocket handed me a big silver dollar; my first, my very first dollar. I clutched it, caught in my breath with wonder and exultation and ran home holding tight and hard on my dollar till I had laid it in my mother's lap, where she sat at her little wheel spinning. Mother kissed me and cried and we cried and cried together, with delight.

Mother washed my feet and legs, washed them in warm water and milk and maybe with silent tears. She put me to bed after supper and next morning I was up and away at work with the oxen.

We had no newspapers as yet in reach of us, and

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the mails were only weekly and were very uncertain in unsettled weather, but there were rumors in the air about new gold mines to the south, on the way to California. These new placer mines were in what is now called the Rouge river country. The right name is Red river, so named by the early French explorers.

But while we had no newspapers within easy reach, men were all the more disposed to ask and give the news as men passed up and down by way of Oregon and into California. There were many peddlers going up and down now; passing preachers always had been numerous from the first, and they stopped at all times and prayed late and long; for mother knew better how to prepare and serve a good meal than any one else in the borderland. Of course they were always very welcome. But really and truly it was a great bother when they insisted, as they always did, before going on, on getting us all down on our knees and praying and praying, and praying the longest hour I ever saw.

Still, they gave lots of information, good and bad, about the new mines. And I was the most eager of all listeners. I wanted to go to the new gold mines. Do not wonder at or blame me. It was in my blood and my blood was hot for action. Do not think this was unnatural for one so young. Bear in mind I was born and cradled on wheels.

Besides these peddlers and preachers and passing immigrants who were seeking homes and came to consult papa and talk over old times, there were now many pack trains coming to Oregon and going back, often camping close by to get butter and eggs and garden truck, and they, too, had lots to tell about the mines. My parents guessed at my burning

desire to be off and away, even if I had to ride the bell mule of the pack train and be cook to the greasy greasers; but I kept, or tried to keep, it all to myself.

Mother had pulled, heckled, distaffed, and spun all the flax, and as we had sheared the sheep—clean, white and burrless sheep in the long waving grass in those days—she then took up the wool and soon went away with a basketful of spools and shuttlecocks to where there was a loom at a distant neighbor's, and before a week was back with a bolt of cloth as big as she could carry.

My! the plans for the placing of that bolt of cloth. Papa must have a suit; John D., who was training to teach in two little families away up on the forks of the Mohawk, must have a suit. Mother must have a petticoat, and above all, all the three boys must have bathing suits.

Our second crop in Oregon was a miracle of nature's generosity. The wheat was tall, strong, bowed down with laden heads of yellow gold. The fruit trees had grown beyond conception the first year, and the second blossoming they were pink and white with glory, and brown and busy wild bees from the mountains made honey while we, all of us who were not teaching school, worked as hard and as happy, too, as they. The apple trees in the autumn were red and pink and yellow with luscious fruit. We had surely come upon a land of milk and honey. The cattle, too, were increasing in the rank, rich grasses beyond all reasonable calculation.

We had no mills within reach those first years; no machinery of any sort, and so had to winnow out our grain by tossing it in the wind, as in olden Bible days, and let the wind blow the chaff away, while

the wheat fell down on the outspread wagon sheet. This wheat, boiled, then baked, or fried, made a fine substitute for bread. But sometimes we had Indian squaws, with their stone pestles and deep stone mortars, grind wheat on shares, so as to have wheat bread for breakfast on Sunday when the preachers came; and this was almost every Sunday.

But at the end of two years a shrewd Yankee set up a mill for grinding wheat, a day's drive distant, and soon the report spread about that the squaws were in the habit of mixing up roasted grasshoppers with their mortar-made flour, and this, of course, drove us all to the mill to get bread for Sunday and the preachers. I can now see that this was all a fiction.

These stone mills or mortars with the long and shapely stone pestles, of a finer quality of stone, are found all up and down the Pacific sea bank by the miners, and not a cabin but has one or more in the door yard. And this same mortar and pestle is found in all the museums of Japan. But I have searched the Holy Land, and, indeed all other lands I know, in vain for this primitive mill. So that I am firmly persuaded that the Oregon and California Indians came to us from Japan, most likely by way of the Aleutian islands, or Behring straits.

Immigrants kept coming, the generous Oregonians going out each year to meet them. The congested lower end of the great valley—comparatively congested—began to empty out its multitude up toward our way, and new cabins glistened in the morning dew to right and left and far away before us till not a foot of vacant tillable land was left.

And what noble pioneers! Poor enough they were, most of them, as were we at first, but they

were all industrious, honest as a rule, and as steady as oak; devout people, who always insisted on building a church and school house, however humble, the very first thing.

But, at the same time, there came pouring in on the other side into California the most depraved and evil element through the Golden Gate that ever took human form. This was the convict class from the British penal colonies—"ticket-of-leave men," some of them—almost all of them bad to begin with, but doubly bad now with gold on every hand to be had in heaps almost for the taking.

While it had all along been conceded by my parents that I was to go, when go I must, to the gold mines, while my brother taught school along with papa, and Jimmy took care of the stock, this brutal new element made them hesitate now.

But go I must. The wheels of the covered wagon in which I had been born and bred were whirling and whirling, and I must be off. Many were going; boys, men, and even whole families were off, or about to get off, for the newly found mines out toward the south of us, on the very edge of dreaded California, but I must be one of them. Another boy of about my age joined me. We ran away from school at night. He was bright, precocious, comely, and ever so much beyond me in wit and wisdom, for he had lived in cities and mixed with people, while I had always been afraid of both.

My bright young companion fell in with a rich man, who took a liking to him, as he rode his mule behind his long pack train, and so he found employment at once. Right here, where Fremont had crossed the Klamath—named by him the Klamat—almost within a stone's throw and far down the

turbulent river toward the ocean, were found some of the richest mines ever known.

Left alone I rode to where I found a party from Oregon trying to arrange to open a placer mine in a deep wooded gulch down on the Klamath river. There were twenty-seven of them. One of them, a preacher, knew papa. Each man had a horse, blanket, pick, shovel and pan, a tin cup, a sheath knife, and a gun, pistols, and plenty of ammunition. They were fairly well equipped, as equipments went in those days, with mule loads of beans, bacon, coffee, sugar, and flour. They had chosen their foreman, their moderator, everything but that most important person, the cook. I said timidly to the preacher who was moderator: "Will you let me cook and come in as a partner? I used to help mother cook!"

"But, my boy, you will have to get up long before daylight. You will have to brown and grind and make the coffee. You will have to cook the beans and bacon, get the wood and water; weigh and keep the gold dust and bags of gold, and stick right in camp all the time."

"I'll do it; please let me try it."

There was a consultation. The preacher was on my side, and it was finally agreed that if I would stick to it I could come in as full partner; but that if I did not stick close to my contract I would have to lose not only the place, but my share of gold. I made but one proviso: I would stick to it until they could get a better cook. I tried to believe I was happy; but I was very miserable, thinking about my parents and did not sleep.

We had no coffee mill, and I had to pound up the tough coffee, after browning it in a frying pan,

with the poll of my hatchet on a stone; had to use a piece of my buckskin coat—the tail of it—if you please, to pound it in. But I was not happy. I fried the beans, brown to a turn; my flapjacks were pronounced perfect, and I was in a new world. I tried to feel that I was going to get on.

In a very few days, the men, working all the time from sun to sun, and often by the great camp fires till late at night, had hewn out sluices for washing and were soon shoveling in gold, gold and gold, from the deep bed rock of the narrow little gulch with great trees hanging over head. We “cleaned up” every Saturday evening. The gold was left sitting aside by the pile of provisions and saddles till Sunday morning, when the foreman dried it, weighed it, and divided it evenly among the twenty-eight of the camp. The men always left their bags under the head of their beds, or by the roots of the trees where they slept. We rested and washed up Sundays. The men were as kind as they could be to me. It was quite a task to get wood and to carry all the water up from the gulch, but on Sundays when they were idle, they all lent a hand when they could.

Finally one Sunday there came along with others, a bright appearing and well-dressed man with an English sailor accent and hair parted in the middle. He sang most melodiously and with great zest. The preacher liked him, had a talk with him, and finding he was foot-loose and looking for a place, asked him to stay with us and help cook till he could do better. I was about worn out and gladly offered to let him sleep with me, as almost all the men slept double, if he would only stay and help for a little time, if ever so little.

He had the broadest toed shoes I ever saw on any man's foot. They were almost, if not quite new. The second day I asked him where he got them. He said San Francisco. Remembering how the Oregonians disliked the Californians, especially the convict and San Francisco sort, I advised him not to mention San Francisco, as we all had an idea it was a very bad place.

That night, or rather early next morning, I felt him get up. I saw him, or at least I felt I saw him, go down on tiptoe to the sluices with his big-toed shoes in his left hand. I felt about, got hold of a ramrod, and poked the nearest sleeper, pointing down toward the sluices. Some men followed and found the man, deafened by the rush of water, picking up the nuggets in the tail of the sluice and filling the big toes of his San Francisco shoes.

They quietly led him up, putting his shoes where they always sat the gold pan and then tied him to a tree and went back to bed. I got up and got breakfast and then the men got up, heard the ugly story as they washed and ate and got ready in a very few minutes to try the man for his life. It was a sad case. I pitied him with all my heart, but knew that by every rule of miner's law and equity the man must hang.

They tried him, found him guilty, and sentenced him to hang that night at "early candle lighten," as the preacher put it. A big oak tree stood, broad-boughed and stately, on the further bank, only a few steps from where the men were at work. He, in a dazed and helpless way, confessed he came from San Francisco, a crime in the eyes of Oregonians to begin with. And he hopelessly admitted that he had got big-toed shoes made on purpose to plunder miners.

Chapter 7

MY FIRST SONG



HEY took him over to the big tree, tied him securely, marked off the grave and set him to digging. I was told to help him dig his grave and not let him get away. The foreman said, gruffly: "Kid, there's going to be a hanging at early candle lightening! A hanging of some sort, sure. All the miners round about here know, and all are a-coming to a hangin'. So if he is not here we must hang some one else. See?"

I went over to help the dazed, dumb sailor man, with his hair parted in the middle, and when we had dug down a few feet he sat down on the edge, wiped his sweating face, and took out a small newspaper. It was named, "The Matrimonial Noose." He explained that a party of many convict men and women had come up from Australia and that some of the party had put in the long days of that voyage printing this paper. He read some very startling personals from the women of the party setting forth their merits and their charms. There was not one, with but a single exception, who did not boast her beauty, virtue, youth, or something of that sort.

This one exception was that of a woman who wanted to get out into the gold mines and go to work. The man said she was already over in Yreka, a big town only a day or so distant, and was a good cook. I took the paper, told the man to keep on digging, and went down to the foreman with it. I left half a dozen heads huddled together

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over that personal, reading and re-reading it. Of course, they must hang the man; but as I, their cook, was already half dead, what could they do? Why not one of them go and get the woman?

They took the terrified, half dead and helpless convict over to dinner and asked him all sorts of questions. No, the woman was not a bad woman, only not pretty. That was the only fault he could be persuaded to admit. So it was settled that Long Dan, or Daniel Long, as he was afterwards known, set out to bring her, if he could. We would build her a cabin. The wretched man with his grave only half dug had been told that if his story about the woman was true and Dan could bring her, he would have to help her cook. He meekly agreed that he would prefer this to being hung.

I can now see that they had no intention of hanging the man at all. They set him to filling up his grave and to cutting cabin logs close by so that they could throw up a cabin.

The logs being cut they put them in place at once, covering the cabin with cedar slats, from which they had made the sluices. Then the preacher who would marry them, if they wanted to be or would be married, said we must have a reception; songs and a march around, a sort of religious procession around the cabin with torches. And would the man we did not hang, help?

Would he! With a gasp, a breath that must have reached away down to the heels of the big-toed shoes, fairly danced with delight at the idea and began singing this chorus:

“For a woman she can do more with a man
Than a king and his whole arm-ee!”

And then the preacher asked me to make the

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song with that chorus at the end of each verse; to show the woman how truly important she must be in a camp of so many men and not one single woman! And this was my first offense in the line of song.

I did not know anything at all about poetry, but I was full of the Bible and Bible themes, so I first took up Sampson:

"Now, Sampson he was a mighty strong man,
A mighty strong man was he;
But he lost his hair and he lost his eyes,
And also his liber-tee!
"For a woman she can do more with a man
Than a king and his whole arm-ee!"

Then I took up Daniel in the lion's den; then I took up King David and Uriah's wife, and so on. Then I concluded with the following lines about that wisest of all men:

"Now, Solomon he was a mighty wise man,
A mighty wise man was he;
Aye, Solomon he had 700 wives,
And also a dyspep-see.
"For a woman she can do more with a man
Than a king and his whole arm-ee!"

You should have heard this chorus as the twenty-seven men, led by the preacher and the man we didn't hang, marched around that cabin and held high their blazing pitch-pine torches. What a rehearsal! She came! Dan smuggled her into the cabin and, with a full heart, got back and around to the preacher and whispered that they were already engaged, and now, since the cabin was all ready, they wanted to be married right off.

Then Dan led her forth, and they were married by torchlight, and then the boys all went to bed, to let the poor, honest woman, who had come so far to

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work, have a good night's rest. I did not see her till next morning. But I am frank to say that she had been bravely honest about her looks. She was the plainest woman I had ever seen. At least, this was my feeling at first glance. But she grew to be prettier every day as she rested, and got up great big good dinners out of almost nothing.

I was very ill now and must see a doctor. Never having been strong enough to eat and assimilate meat and having here nothing at all to eat except beans and bacon and coffee, and besides having been on my feet all the time, my slim little legs became stiff and began to show purple spots—the scurvy.

I gave my share of the claims to the unfortunate creature known as “the man we didn't hang,” and gave my share of the gold, thirty-one ounces, to the preacher, to take back to papa, as he and nearly all the other men with families in Oregon were going to return before the snows made the mountains impassable.

I fell in with a new man, a new manner of man, on my way to the city, a great big man, body and soul; a close companion now and then as the years went by in many lands both wild and tame.

At Yreka I collapsed and knew nothing more till I found myself in the care of a kind little Chinaman with Dr. Ream pulling me through to health and strength. In the background stood the man I had seen in the trail as I came to town.

This man Ream was one of the handsomest, manliest men ever seen. He was the idol of the new city and strange and unusual as it may seem, he is so still. He is and has ever been, the king and dictator of all that end of California. They offered to send him to the Federal Senate; but he protested

that he did not want to go to any place where he could not see Mt. Shasta.*

When up and about, the man I had met in the trail and who stood modestly in the background, took me out and away over a snowy mountain to a new mining camp called Humbug creek, where we wintered. Life was monotonous here, for we had to live alone in our cabin because of the intolerable toughness and roughness of the men here at The Forks, who made their focus of action and distraction in the Howling Wilderness saloon. Here I laid the scene of "The Danites," my famous play, but have always been sorry I printed it, as it is unfair to the Mormons and Chinese. But he had a few books, besides I had brought with me from Oregon Cæsar's Commentaries and a small Latin school-book, *Historie Sacre*, and we were neither lonely or idle. He had many theories about the growth and formation of gold. And I think they were correct, for in all the many great gold fields I have penetrated, and that is many, I have put his ideas to the test and in all these fifty years I have rarely found his theories at fault.

Mt. Shasta is monarch of the Sierra de Nevada (mountains of snow); monarch of the entire mountain range reaching from Alaska to Mexico. True there is a higher mountain in the Sierra Madre (Mother mountain), away to the south, but it is a bold, bare eminence without form, color, or expression, and there are groups and chains of glorious snow peaks in the Sierra Grande del Norte far away to the north, of indescribable splendor, but

*Dr. Ream has passed since this was penned. His funeral was the largest and most impressive seen in California, the carriages proceeding two abreast.

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Mt. Shasta is so solitary, so imperiously alone, that you never once question his supremacy; you do not even ask his altitude. He is, geographically, artistically, supremely supreme; as alone as God upon the great white throne.

Mt. Shasta is not a gold-bearing mountain, because it was born of fire. Gold and fire do not affiliate. And yet, after more than fifty years of persistent and cruel quest, they are still madly searching for gold in Mt. Shasta, and in all its immediate, vast and stately environs.

A "stampede" was on. Miners were flying like fugitives of a beaten army for the south side of Mt. Shasta. We were two men, a boy and two Indian children.

The Indian children, protégés of the Prince, content enough at all times and places, were quite at home when we came upon the imperial mountain. They had been born and bred on and about the stately steeps and Klamat, the boy, was more than at home in the leading through new and unknown ways so as to avoid the stream of strong, rude men who were swarming through the land, up rivers, down creeks and canyons in quest of gold.

With the first coming of birds in the spring, Klamat found a place that might have been compared to Paradise. It was not yet in full flower, but looking out from our little wood-walled cabin over the dense forests to the south we could see the summer coming in glorious procession up the plunging, foaming McCloud river.

Klamat was sullen, morose, a true Indian when a true Indian is angered. But he kept the camp hooks well hung with venison and all good things of the chase. The Prince, out of pity, had picked up a

feeble and bookish old botanist. The bookish old man was stronger now and kept on steadily with his botanizing. The girl went in quest of her kindred, found them and brought them to see us. But the prince had plans of his own; great plans which he slowly unfolded to me; making me almost believe these plans for the solution of the perishing savages were my own. Briefly, the idea was to make this mountain sacred to the Indians. To persuade the United States to proclaim it a city of refuge, a sanctuary, in short, a sort of Indian republic.

There was a city down yonder on the Sacramento in the heart of the richest sort of mines, not a wild city as Yreka was, but a city of books, beautiful women and gentlemen. It was a long, hard ride distant, but Klamat knew all the trails and he and the prince were often gone for days. I, of course, was not told all his plans and enterprises. I only know that he had everything brought to our camp that comfort could demand and that, as usual, he seemed to have heaps and heaps of money.

Meantime I had joined Mountain Joe in locating Soda Springs ranch, and then riding away south to Sonora for a band of half-wild horses which he actually bought by the acre; they were as cheap as that! He brought Mexicans with us to break them en route. But when I got back I eagerly hastened up to our mountain home on the steeps.

I do not know why I stood out, looking down over the woods, watching, waiting for the prince, for I was not really lonesome; never in my life in most dismal places was I ever very lonesome; but somehow I felt that there was going to be trouble. We had a good cabin; it was full of good things;

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we were on good terms with our Indian neighbors. The prince had gold dust, and gold coin also, lying loose and at hand for all. What trouble could there possibly be in the air?

I felt sorry somehow about something of which I knew nothing at all. And when they came I was certain there was bad news. But no big-hearted man will bother you with bad news at once unless compelled to. The wild Indian and the cultivated Englishman are exactly alike in this. The time to break bad news is after dinner, as you sit quietly at your camp-fire or in your club and all at rest.

After an ample feast came talk of new books, the newspapers, the prince pointed to a paragraph in the *Shasta City Courier*. Briefly, a body of Modocs had taken up position in Castle Rocks, cut off all communication to the North, captured the mule mail train, killed not only men, but women and children, and all the country was in consternation. Restless young men of the Trinities and Shastas were on the war path and Captain Crook had come all the way from Fort Jones, near Yreka, and was to fall upon the Modocs in the rear, while Judge Gibson was raising a band of scouts, both red and white, to try and open the mail line and avenge the massacre of women and children.

Soon the prince went south and I took up my abode with Mountain Joe and friendly Indians.

Mountain Joe, who had been one of Fremont's men, was doing all he could to cultivate a little valley where he kept the mail station and a little mountain tavern. He had dug an irrigation ditch and he and I had left the station, as there was no mail now or travel of any kind, and had gone up the ditch into the woods to look after the water.

Suddenly horses, some of them with feathered arrows in their sides, came dashing past, wild with terror. Looking down toward the river we saw smoke, flames and then a line of Indians, loaded with plunder, wading the river and disappearing in the woods that hung on the further bank.

Joe raised a small bunch of indolent men, such as always hang about places of the sort on the border, brown men, red men, and followed—a dangerous thing to do. But he must know who they were and where they were heading. Soon it was clear that they were climbing for the Modoc camp, away up in the clouds of Castle Rocks.

Mountain Joe now turned back and led his weary men down the river till he fell in with Judge Gibson on his way up Castle creek to join Captain Crook, of the regular army, as Crook had ordered; ascending Castle creek, his Indian scouts in the van. With a sharp detour to the right we soon compassed the granite pinnacles. But still no sign of the regular army. Our Indian scouts reported us in close approach to the hostile Indians.

A short consultation was held and Mountain Joe insisted that it was now impossible to turn back or hope to escape without a battle. A hasty lunch in the brush and then we gathered up our guns and crept forward. Their fortress was in a great mass of rocks, almost hidden by climbing chaparral and clinging vines, and nearly surrounded by a marsh.

Joe put me behind a little pine in the very edge of the open marsh with a young Indian and pushed on to put others of the scant battalion in place. I stood my gun against the pine, looked to my pistols, tightened my belt and then put some extra bullets in my mouth, as I seemed to recall all I had ever

read about fighting Indians. I was to be in my first real battle. Suddenly there was a simultaneous crash of arms. Smoke encircled the hostile camp and the Indian at my side rushed across the narrow opening and fell, pierced with arrows.

The little marsh valley was clouded with smoke. But all from our own guns. This was, perhaps, the last battle on this continent with Indians where they used only the bow and arrow. We found fire-arms a-plenty in their camp, but they were not used. Our prisoners told us they did not know how to load them. Night was coming on. We must finish the fight. White men do not fight Indians to advantage in the dark!

Joe led around to where Gibson stood on the rocks behind the trees, looking anxiously up and out for the regulars. He had already lost several of his Indian volunteers and one white man.

Despairing at last of any aid from Captain Crook, he crept down to Joe and his anxious men, and said: "Boys, we must make a charge through the marsh at this narrow neck and finish it hand-to-hand. Who will go with me?"

Nearly if not all eagerly pressed to his side, but he hastily chose only the few who were best equipped with hand weapons, and dashed on through the long, strong grass and mud and water. Joe had made us all cut holes in our brankets and put our heads through; the best shield in the world. Flint arrows are like little saws on either edge. Their flint teeth catch in the wool and will not go through.

Our charge had been so sudden that there was no time for the enemy to rally. But for all that we were met by a fearful shower, and I think it

safe to say that each man had at least a dozen arrows clinging to his blanket as we rushed into the brushy fortress. But we all got safely through the marsh. Soon Gibson held up a hand with an arrow through it, and some others were hit in the hands and arms. But we kept on till we began to hear our own men coming on and up from other like charges through the marsh, and it seemed we had entirely won.

Gibson called a halt, so as to be careful about hitting our own men, when suddenly there was another deluge of arrows, and I dropped at his side. I felt no real pain, as one would think, with an arrow thrust through the side of my neck and face till the point stuck away out at the back of my neck, but I was stunned. It seemed to me as if my head had been crushed, and I remember putting up my hand to feel my head. This was, perhaps, because the arrow had pierced so nearly the base of the brain. I do not remember anything else about that day, and very little else about the next year. In fact, my memory and, in truth, all my faculties failed me for ever so long after that.

A young man kneeled down as another held my head, and cutting off the arrow's point, drew the shaft through my face. I felt this and felt a relief as they heaped up leaves and made a pillow for my head. I remember hearing men shout from the top of the savage fortress and knew the fight was done and won.

The disabled men were carried down from out Castle Rock by women prisoners. The one who carried me on her back had lost both her boys and husband in the battle. She was not kind at first. They tied my head close to hers so that she could

steady it with her hand. Then I talked to her in her own tongue, which I had learned very perfectly from our Indian children. She then told her sorrows and said I must be her boy in place of the ones killed. When I did not or could not answer, she told me if I would be her boy she would not drop me over the ledge as she intended when she came to the narrow place where only the mountain sheep went down. They laid me under some cedars down by the Sacramento river and the Indian woman was truly as a mother to me.

Then papa came, nearly a month's ride through the mountains and watched with me all the summer. But I did not know him until late in the fall, when I slowly began to grow stronger, mind and body. He must go back to mother and the younger children. I was not yet able to make the long ride. I was taken to Shasta City. The people were good to me and made up a little school in a camp not far away, where I taught miners by night and tried to mine by day, promising papa to come home by way of San Francisco in the spring.

But when spring came and Mount Shasta stood out white and glorious above the clouds and beckoned me I hailed him as a brother. I, too, would rise above the clouds that mantled me and, in spite of all protests, slipped away and joined my red men once more at his feet. But I was not a brother of the gleaming and all glorious mountain. I was only a companion of the clouds that gathered here and there about his brow; as weak, as helpless and vacillating as they. When the Modocs rose up one night and massacred eighteen men, every man in Pitt River Valley, I alone was spared; and

spared only because I was *Los bobo*, the fool. Then more battles and two more wounds. My mind was as the mind of a child and my memory is uncertain here. I only know I made many and such piteous mistakes. In fact, if I were to take the mistakes out of my life, during these years, I would have but little left. My wound in the face and neck was still serious. I could not lie down, but took such rest as I could get in my roving among the Indians, half reclining in my blanket or skins against a tree.

But how kind these people were, how considerate! I was as a babe and they treated me in my weakness as if I had been newly born to their tribe. But soon I was stronger, body and soul. The women gave me gold—from whence?—and I, being “a renegade,” descended to San Francisco and set sail for Boston, but stopped at Nicaragua with Walker. Thence up the coast to Oregon, when strong enough. I went home, went to college some, taught school some, studied law at home some; but ever and ever the lure of the mountains called and called, and I could not keep my mind on my books. But I could keep my mind on the perils I had passed. I could write of them, and I did write of them, almost every day. The Tale of the Tall Alcalde, Oregonian, Californian, With Walker in Nicaragua—I had lived all these and more; and they were now a part of my existence. If you care to read further of my life, making allowance for poetic license, you will find these literally true.

Meantime I was admitted to the bar. Then came the discovery of gold in Idaho, Montana, and so on, and I was off like a rocket, with the rest. I came back to my gentle parents with gold enough to build a beautiful new home and had money to

buy a newspaper besides. My elder brother went to the Civil War and his mother never saw him any more. I plead for peace in my paper, believing in papa's Quaker creed, and it was suppressed. I went into the mountains of Oregon, where hosts of my California friends had opened mines, and after leading them against the hostile savages, was elected their judge. Then I wrote and re-wrote, but was never quite strong until after I rolled up my papers and suddenly found myself in London, where I published my first real book, "Songs of the Sierras."

Home again, then South America, England again, the continent, published more books, then home by way of the Orient.

Having met the Prince, on a visit to Paris from Nicaragua at the time, he helped me to recall our life among the Modocs, adding such romance of his own as he chose. Then the book was translated and published in both Paris and London. It was a massive book; and a gold mine. It was brought out by Bently, publisher to the Queen, in London, under the title of "Life Among the Modocs." In Paris it was called, "*Scenes de la vie des mineurs et des Indiens de Californie.*"

Grateful that I was born in an age of active and mighty enterprise and exulting, even as a lad, in the primitive glory of nature, wild woods, wild birds, wild beasts, I began, as my parents pushed west through the wilderness, to make beauty and grandeur the god of my idolatry, even before I yet knew the use of words. To give expression to this love and adoration, to lead others to see grandeur, good, glory in all things animate or inanimate, rational or irrational, was my early and has ever been my one aspiration.

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My first lines, and in truth, all my lines, as a rule, were descriptive stories of the lands I knew, so that my poems are literally my autobiography.

When my venerated parents passed, with whom I had begun my wanderings before I knew how to walk, I began this story of our early struggles, to let the world learn and ever remember that "in those days there were giants in the land."

The Pilgrims of Plymouth Rock were giants, "mighty men who were of power and renown," as also were those of Jamestown; gentle mental and moral giants. And their children and their grandchildren, who pushed out, in the middle of the last century, for the vast westmost sea, were more truly giants than they or any others named in history; for these made such a venture as never man made before in song or story. There was never room, in all the old world, for this three and four thousand miles of wilderness, wild beasts and wilder men, even if there had been the giants.

The little story of our pilgrimage is simply that of thousands and hundreds of thousands who peopled the ultimate west. We were, perhaps, a little more reliant on, or a little more dependent on Providence, a little more prayerful than the average, perhaps, for while others carried guns to protect them the head of our little party never laid hand to a gun, never fired a shot in all his long life. All the vast multitude, as in the exodus of old, in quest of the Promised Land, was, as a rule, religious, and buried their dead with hymns and prayers, all along that dreary half year's journey on which no coward ever ventured, and where the weak fell by the wayside, leaving a natural selection of good and great people, both in soul and body.

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Our vast graveyard, of what was once the American desert, is now, in places, cities, villages, fertile farms. "The Ship in the Desert" and "Death Valley" are no more, but the atmosphere is there still, the room, the mirage, the cobalt blue of mid-day, the copper and bronze of sunset. The only question is, have I been true to color, clime, actualities? Is my mighty ocean the real ocean or an imaginary one? Will those who care to follow through these strange lands or over these storm-torn seas, for either profit or pleasure, say I cried aloud in the wilderness, a false prophet, or that I knew my mission and followed it quietly and truly, as best I knew?

These are questions not to be answered now, but generations hence. This brilliant age of enterprise, of railroad levels and irrigating canals, is busy fashioning the path for the poets to come after us. We are boring tunnels through Olympus for traction cars, we would tap and dam and drain even the river Lethe to water the desert, were that dreamful conception of song and fable to be found with us. But bear in mind we are only plowing, sowing, now, making ready for the reaper, the happy harvester of song, who will come to his own, and all in good time, when we of today, the workers and the builders, shall not be forgotten. Only let us build true, level, square, and deserve to be remembered.

Of course, both warp and woof of every real poem, beyond a sonnet's length, must be shot through and through with threads of gold and silver, else it is at best but a guide book, and I would like to be remembered by those of the years to be as a pioneer who not only blazed the path,

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but also loved the flowers under foot and the peaks that companion with the stars.

My poems may be no better nor much worse than the poems of Homer, Virgil, Byron; but are they not new, unique? If not, then have my work and wanderings been in vain and my life labors, however delightful they have been in the doing, must be set down as a failure; for I have certainly had a golden harvest field and, with a few hard exceptions, the most glorious opportunity in all this world.

I doubt if my parents ever felt any real pleasure in reading my first book, "Songs of the Sierras," even with all the sudden glory it brought me abroad. Papa had always looked with such horror upon war and contention of all kinds, yet here in this book was bloodshed and strife, war with the Modocs, war in Nicaragua, and so on, almost from cover to cover. And as for mother, these stories of my witless and fruitless struggles only reminded her of what she had suffered during my heedless years of absence, and all the glory in the world could not make her forget.

But when this fine translation from Paris was laid in their hands they fairly hugged it to their hearts with delight and exultation. Ah, to be read in refined and brilliant Paris! This was indeed true glory to them; and I joy to know that they had at last some satisfaction born of my wanderings and my lawless energy.

Papa, never so robust, was thrown from his farm wagon and died soon after, while I was still wandering. I came home, got a mountainside of my own, overlooking San Francisco, and brought mother, whose mind was nearly destroyed by the

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deaths in her family, and she took care of me while I tried to take care of her, for more than twenty years, when she, too, passed, to rest in a little grove of cypress trees planted by her own hand up yonder on the hillside. A bronze bust, by a famous artist, of her strong, sad face, is to be seen in the library of the Oregon University.

In profound penitence for the years of sorrow I caused these two gentlest souls I ever knew, I lay these gathered leaves upon their graves, and again, pensive and alone, turn and listen to the lure of wandering through this beautiful, beautiful world.

The Hights, Dimond, Cal., 1908.



BITS FROM MY JOURNAL

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GOING.



NEW YORK, *August 19, 1870.* I shall get out of this town at once. * * * At Central Park today I wanted to rest under a tree, a cool, clean tree, that reached its eager arms up to God, asking, praying for rain, and a policeman, club in hand, told me to keep off the grass. "Keep off the grass!" There was no grass there. New York, if you will come to Oregon you may sit untroubled under the trees, roll in grass that is grass, and rest forever. * * * I must put my trousers outside my boots. Then I am sure they won't nag me and get after me everywhere I go. * * * If I was living in this town I would make these policemen give up their clubs. Are the people here a lot of dogs, that these fellows have to use clubs? Take away their clubs, and give them pistols and swords. If a man must be killed, let him be killed like a gentleman, not like a dog. I am going to get out of this town quick. I do not fit in here.

August 20. Bought my ticket, \$65, second class, ship *Europa*, Anchor Line, to land at Glasgow, and off tomorrow. * * * Have tried so hard to see Horace Greeley. But he won't see me. Maybe he is not here. But I think he is. * * *

August 21. Went over and tried to see Beecher; found a door by the pulpit open, and went in. The

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carpenters were fixing up the church, but they looked so hard at me that I did not ask for Mr. Beecher. I went up on the platform and sat down and peeled an apple, and put the peelings on the little stand. Then I heard a man cough away back in the dark, and he came and climbed up the little ladder, and took those peelings in his thumb and finger—long, lean, bony fingers, like tongs—and backing down the ladder he went to the door and threw them away with all his might. Then he coughed again, but all the time he did not let on to see me. I felt awful, and got down and left soon. However, I got some leaves from a tree by the door to send to mother. * * * Two handsome, well-dressed gentlemen spoke to me today, the only people who have spoken civilly to me since I have been here—except to bully me; said they knew me in Texas, but could not recall my name. Buncos?

IN AYR, SCOTLAND.

September 4, 1870. What a voyage! Cold? Cold seas and cold seamen. I don't think I spoke a dozen words in the whole desolate dozen days. A lot of Germans going home to fight filled the ship; a hard, rough lot, and they ate like hogs. * * * Saw an iceberg as big as Mount Hood in the middle of the ocean. * * * And why may there not be people on these broken bits of the great sealed-up North? Fancy Sir John Franklin's ship frozen fast and all in trim, he there stiff and stern, glass in hand, his frozen men all about him at their posts—fancy all this drifting away to the friendly warm waves of the South, on one of these great islands of ice. * * * Saw Ireland on the north;

green as the green sea; dotted with cottages, crossed by stone fences like a checker-board. It is a checker-board: the white cottages are the chessmen. What games shall be played? Who play them? And who win? * * *

September 10. God bless these hale and honest Scotch down here at peaceful Ayr! Did not stop an hour in Glasgow. It looked too much like New York. But here I have come upon the edge of Godland; mountains and rivulets and cold, clear skies. It looks like Oregon. Only I miss the trees so much. A land that is barren of trees is old and ugly, like a bald-headed man, and ought to get ready to die. * * * I have made lots of friends. One man showed me more than one hundred books, all by Ayrshire poets, and some of them splendid! I have not dared to tell any one yet that I, too, hope to publish a book of verse. * * *

I go every day from here to the "Auld Brig" over the Doon, Highland Mary's grave, and "Allo-way's auld haunted kirk!" * * * Poetry is in the air here. I am now working like a beaver, and shall give up my journal. If my mind is not strong enough to hold what I see, or if my thoughts and notions are not big and solid enough to stick together and stay with me, let them go. * * * Heigho! what a thing is the mind: a sieve, that catches all the ugly things, stray and wreck and castaway, all that is hard and hideous. But lo! our sieves will not hold the sweet pure water. * *

September 12. Am going from here to Byron's tomb in Nottingham very soon now. I have a wreath of laurel, sent by a lady from San Francisco, for the great poet's grave, and I go to place it there. Shall take in Scott's home and tomb. * * *

Good-by, Burns, brother. I know you, love you. Our souls have wandered together many a night this sweet autumn-time by the tranquil banks of the Doon. * * *

September 16. They say Carlyle lives near here, on a farm. I like Carlyle—that is, the parts of him which I don't understand. And that is saying that I like nearly all of Carlyle, I reckon.

September 18. In the sunset today, as I walked out for the last time toward the tomb of Highland Mary, I met a whole line of splendid Scotch lassies with sheaves of wheat on their heads and sickles on their arms. Their feet were bare, their legs were bare to the knees. Their great strong arms were shapely as you can conceive; they were tall, and their lifted faces were radiant with health and happiness. I stepped aside in the narrow road to enjoy the scene and let them pass. They were going down the sloping road toward some thatched cottages by the sea; I toward the mountains. How beautiful! I uncovered my head as I stepped respectfully aside. But lifting the hat and giving the road to women here seems unusual, and one beautiful girl, with hair like the golden sheaves she carried, came up to me, talked and laughed and bantered in words that I could not understand, much as I wanted to. * * * And then the beautiful picture moved on. O Burns, Burns, come back to the banks of bonny Doon! It is worth while.

* * * * *

IN THE RUINS OF MELROSE ABBEY.

The Royal Inn, September 20. Waded Tweed yesterday, and looked over Sir Walter Scott's

"poem in stones," as he called it. So beautiful, and so sad. Empty as a dead man's palm is this place now. Wet and cold, I walked on to Melrose Abbey, three miles distant. Was let in through a great gate by a drunken old woman. The sun was going down; the place of buried kings seemed holy—too holy at least to have a drunken and garrulous and very ugly woman at my elbow. I gave a half-crown and asked her to leave me. She did so, and I rested on the tombs; still warm they were with sunshine gone away. Then a sudden fog drew in up the Tweed past Dryburg, where the great wizard is buried, and I began to grow chill. I got up and groped about in the fog among the tombstones and fallen arches. But in a very little time I found the fog so dense that together with the night it made total darkness. I hurried to the great gate. It was closed. The wretched old woman had maybe got still more drunk on my half-crown, and I was there for the night. And what a night I passed! It would have killed almost any other tramp. As it is, my leg is so stiff I can hardly hobble down-stairs.

AT LORD BYRON'S TOMB.

O master, here I bow before a shrine;
 Before the lordliest dust that ever yet
 Moved animate in human form divine.
 Lo! dust indeed to dust. The mould is set
 Above thee, and the ancient walls are wet,
 And drip all day in dark and silent gloom;
 As if the cold gray stones could not forget
 Thy great estate shrunk to this sombre room,
 But learn to weep perpetual tears above thy tomb.

September 25. Something glorious! The old man, John Brown by name, took the wreath for Byron's tomb—and a sovereign—and hung it above the tablet, placed on the damp and dingy wall by his sister. Well then, the little-souled people who preside over the little old church did not like it—you see my bargain with the old man is that he is to have a sovereign a year to keep the wreath there as long as he lives (or I have sovereigns)—and he faithfully refused to take down the wreath, but nailed it to the wall. Then the little-souled people appealed to the Bishop. And what has the Bishop done? What has the Bishop said? Not a word. But he has sent another wreath to be nailed alongside of my wreath from California!

O my poet! Worshipped where the world is glorious with the fire and blood of youth! Yet here in your own home—ah well! The old eternal truth of Christ * * * but why say the truth of Christ? Better say the words of Christ; and that means eternal truth. * * * I have not told any one here that I write verses. * * * Byron sang in the voice of a god: and see what they say of him. But they may receive me. “No prophet is without honor, *save in his own land*,” is the language of the text I believe.

September 28. Have written lots of stuff here. I have been happy here. I have worked, and not thought of the past. But tomorrow I am going to go down to Hull, cross the Channel and see the French and Germans fight. For I have stopped work and begun to look back. * * * I see the snow-peaks of Oregon all the time when I stop work—the great white clouds, like hammocks swinging to and fro, to and fro, as if cradling the

gods: maybe they are rocking and resting the souls of great men bound heavenward. * * * And then the valley at the bottom of the peaks; the people there; the ashes on the hearth; the fire gone out * * * there is no one there to rekindle it. * * * Stop looking back, I say. Get back to the Bible truths: the story of Lot and his lost. * * * Never look back. A man, if he be a real man, has his future before him and not behind him. The old story of Orpheus in hell has its awful lesson. I, then, shall go forward and never look back any more. Hell, I know, is behind me. There cannot be worse than hell before me. * * * Yet for all this philosophy and this setting the face forward, the heart turns back.

Calais, France, October 30, 1870. Been to the war! Brutes! Shuttlecocked between the two armies, and arrested every time I turned around. I am sure the Germans would have shot me if I could have spoken a word of French. I am doubly certain the French would have sabred me if I had been able to speak one word of German. As I knew neither tongue, nothing about any language except Modoc—although I am trying to pick up the English—they contented themselves by tumbling all my manuscript—which they could not read—and sending me out of the country. And such heartlessness to each other! By the road one day I found a wounded soldier. He had got out into the hedge: hundreds passed—soldiers, citizens, all sorts. He was calling to all, any one. I got out of the mass of fugitives and tried to help him. Then, when it was seen that some one was at his side, others came up, and he was cared for, I reckon. * * * Everybody running away! I

running faster than ever cripple ran before. This would not sound well in Oregon. I must put it in better form: I will merely say I came on in haste.

IN LONDON.

London, November 2, 1870. Am at last in the greatest city of all this earth. I was afraid to come here, and so it was I almost went quite around this boundless spread of houses before I entered it: saw all these islands and nearly all the continent first. But I feel at home almost, even now, and have only been here three days. Tired though, so tired! And then my leg bothers me badly. There is a bit of lead in there about as big as the end of my thumb. But ever since that night in Melrose Abbey it has felt as big as a cannon-ball. And then I have been rather active of late. The Oregonians ought to have seen me running away from the French, the Germans—both at once. But you see they took my pistols away from me before I had a chance to protest or even suspected what they were going to do. Ah well! I am safe out of it all now, and shall, since I am too crippled to get about, sit still and write in this town. When I came in on the rail from Dover, I left my bag at the station; paid two pence—great big coppers, big as five of America's—and took a ticket for it, and so set out to walk about the city. And how delightfully different from New York!

Now, I want to note something strange. I walked straight to Westminster Abbey—straight as the crooked streets would let me; and I did not ask any one on the way, nor did I have the remotest idea where it was. As for a guide-book, I never

had one in my life. But my heart was in that Abbey, going out to the great spirits, the immortal dust gathered there, and I walked straight to where my heart was. * * * And this encourages me very much. * * * As if by some possible turn of fortune or favor of the gods I—I may really get there, or at least set out upon the road that these silent giants have journeyed on. * * *

The Abbey broods beside the turbid Thames;
Her mother heart is fill'd with memories;
Her every niche is stored with storied names;
They move before me like a mist of seas.

SETTLED DOWN IN LONDON.

I here, because so many false and unfair stories have been told, set down my first few days in London for the good and guidance of earnest young scribes.

November 4. After keeping on my feet till hardly able to stand, I left the Abbey and walked up Whitehall, up Regent street, down Oxford street toward St. Paul's. Then I broke down, and wanted to find a place to stop. But I must have looked too tired and wretched as I dragged myself along. I told a woman finally, who had rooms to let, that I was ill and must stop. She shut the door in my face. New cities, cities new to me, of course, have new ways. If one does not know their ways one frightens the honest folk, and can't get on with them at all.

A public-house here is not a tavern or an inn. I tried to get to stop at two or three of these reeking gin-mills. They stared at me, but went on jerking beer behind the counter, and did not answer. At one place I asked for water. All stopped and

looked at me—women with great mugs of beer half way to their brutal big red mouths; a woman with a baby in one arm, wrapped tightly in a shawl along with herself, and a jug of beer in the other, came and put her face in mine curiously; then the men all roared. And then one good-natured Briton paid for a pewter mug full of beer for me. But as I had never tasted beer, and could not bear the smell of it, I was obliged to refuse it. I was too tired to explain, and so backed out into the street again and hobbled on. I did not get the water. I now learn that one must not ask for water here. No one drinks water here. No public-house keeps it. Well, to one from Oregon, the land of pure water, where God pours it down from the snowy clouds out of the hollow of His hand—the high-born, beautiful, great white rain, this seems strange.

* * * * * * *

All drinking-shops here—or rather “doggeries,” as we call them in Oregon—are called “publics.” And a man who keeps one of these places is called a publican. Now I see the sense and meaning of the Bible phrase, “publicans and sinners.”

When I reached Aldersgate street that first day, I saw the name “Little Britain” to my left, and knowing that Washington Irving had dwelt there, I turned aside to follow where he had been, in the leaves of the Sketch Book. But I could go but a little way. Seeing the sign of the Young Men’s Christian Association close at hand, I climbed up the long crooked stairs, and soon was made quite at home and well refreshed by a cup of coffee and a roll at three half-pence; also a great deal of civility and first-class kindness for nothing at all. I had bed and breakfast at the same reasonable rate; and

the next morning, leaving my watch and money here, I went to Mile End by 'bus, to see where Mr. Bayard Taylor had lived when here.

I lost my way in one of the by-streets, and asked how to get out. People were kind and good-natured, but they spoke with such a queer accent that I could not understand half they said. At last a little girl of a dozen years, very bright and very beautiful, proposed to show me the way to the main street. She was a ray of sunlight after a whole month of storms. * * * She was making neckties, she said, and getting a sixpence a day; five pence she paid to a Mrs. Brady, who lived at 52 New street, and this left her a penny a day to dress and enjoy life upon!

"And can I live with Mrs. Brady for five pence a day?"

"Maybe so. Mrs. Brady has a room; maybe you can get it. Let us go and see."

November 6. We came, we saw, and settled! I give Lizzie a shilling a day to run errands, for my leg is awful. She went to the station and got my bag, and she keeps my few things in perfect shape. I think she has some doubts about my sanity. She watches me closely, and I have seen her shake her head at this constant writing of mine. But she gets her shilling regularly, and oh! she is so happy—and so rich! Mrs. Brady is about six feet high, and very slim and bony. She has but one eye, and she hammers her husband, who drives a wagon for a brewery, most cruelly. He is short and stout as one of his beer-barrels, and a good-hearted soul he is, too. He loves his old telegraph-pole of a wife, however, and refuses to pound her back when she pounds him, although he assured me yesterday, in

confidence, that he was certain he could lick her if he tried.

November 8. Mrs. Brady must be very old or a very great liar. Last night she assured me that her father used to shoe Dick Turpin's horses. She went into detail to show how he would set the shoes on hind side before, to look as if he was going away from London, when, in fact, he was coming this way. As if I did not know anything about horses, and how that all this was impossible. I expect she will next develop that she had some intimate relations with Jack Sheppard.

November 20. Lizzie is a treasure, but she will lie like sixty. Yet she is honest. She goes and brings me my coffee every morning. Mrs. Brady acts as a sort of mother, and is very careful of her in her coarse, hard way. I must find out who she is, and get her to school if I get on. She tells me her people live over on the "Surrey side," wherever that is. But I have already found that, like Mrs. Brady, she does not like to tell the truth about herself if she can get around it. How odd that poor people will lie so! Truth, the best and chiefest thing on this earth, is about the only luxury that costs nothing; and they ought to be persuaded to indulge in it oftener. New street! It is the oldest street, I should say, in this part of London. This house we are in is cracked and has been condemned. The reliable Mrs. Brady says it has only a few months more to stand; that the underground railroad or something runs under it. So I must get out, I guess.

November 30. Camberwell, Surrey Side. Am over here, south side of Thames, close to the Dulwich picture gallery. * * *

BITS FROM MY JOURNAL

COWLEY HOUSE, COWLEY STREET, WESTMINSTER.

February 14, '71. From Mile End to old Westminster, via Camberwell! I am right back of the Abbey. From my garret window I can see the Virginia creepers, which they say were planted by Queen Elizabeth. The walls are high; but this garret of mine is still higher. They call it the poet Cowley's house. As if any poet ever had money enough to build so big a house, or ever had such bad taste as to build such an ugly one.

I hear all the bells of Westminster here, and of Parliament, big Ben, and all. And I hear perpetual pounding and hammering about the Abbey—all the time building or repairing. Not a good place to sleep or to rest, O immortal poets! Such an eternal pounding and pecking of stones and rasping of trowels and mortar no one ever heard. I had rather rest in Oregon,

Where the plants are as trees; where the trees are as
towers

That toy, as it seems, with the stars at night;
Where the roses are forests; where the wild-wood flowers
Are dense unto darkness; where, reaching for light,
They spill in your bosom their fragrance in showers
Like incense spilled down in some sacrament rite.

HUNTING FOR A PUBLISHER.

February 27, '71. I have nearly given up this journal to get out a book. I wanted to publish a great drama called "Oregonian," but finally wrote an easy-going little thing which I called "Arizonian," and put the two together and called the little book "Pacific Poems." It has been ready

for the printer a long time. But here one cannot get a publisher at all unless one pays for it. And my money is about out and I have nothing to pay with. My brother is slow about sending me money. I am so afraid he is seriously ill. But the book must come out, if I even have to publish it without a publisher!

March 12. What a time I have had tramping about this city with my printed "Pacific Poems" under my arm. I think I have called upon or tried to call upon every publisher in this city. I had kept Murray, son of the great Murray, Byron's friend, to the last. I had said to myself: "This man, whatever the others may do, will stand up for the bridge that brought him over. If all others fail I will go to the great Murray. * * * All others failed, and I went, or rather I tried to go, but only tried, the first time or two. I at first marched stiffly and hastily up Albemarle street, past the great publishing house. I then went home. I had seen the house, however. That was a beginning, at least. I slept well here in the gloomy old Cowley House at the head of Cowley street, and next day boldly entered the great publishing house, and called for Mr. Murray. The clerk looked hard at me. Then, mentally settling the fact that I really had business with the great publisher, he said: "Mr. Murray is in. Will you send up your card?"

My heart beat like a pheasant in a forest. For the first time I was to meet a great publisher face to face. "No, no, thank you; not today. I will come tomorrow—tomorrow at precisely this time." And I hurried out of the house, crossed the street, took a long look at it, and went home the happiest man in London.

I came next day an hour before my time, but I did not enter. I watched the clock at the Piccadilly corner, and came in just as I had agreed. I think the clerk had forgotten that I had ever been there. For my part I had remembered nothing else. The great Murray came down—a tall, lean man, bald, with one bad eye, and a habit of taking sight at you behind his long, thin forefinger, which he holds up, as he talks excitedly, and shakes all the time, either in his face or your own; and I was afraid of him from the first, and wanted to get away.

He took me up stairs, when I told him I had a book all about the great West of America; and there he showed me many pictures of Byron—Byron's mother, among the rest, a stout, red-faced woman, with awful fat arms and low, black curls about a low, narrow brow.

I ventured to say she looked good-natured.

"Aye, now, don't you know, she could shie a poker at your head, don't you know?" And the great Murray wagged his finger in her face, as he said this, quite ignoring me, my presence, or my opinion. Then he spun about on his heel to where I stood in the background, and taking sight at me behind his long, lean finger, jerked out the words: "Now, young man, let us see what you have got."

I drew forth my first-born of London town and laid it timidly in his hand. He held his head to one side, flipped the leaves, looked in, jerked his head back, looked in again, twisted his head like a giraffe, and then lifted his long finger:

"Aye, now, don't you know poetry won't do? Poetry won't do, don't you know?"

"But will you not read it, please?"

"No, no, no. No use, no use, don't you know?"

BITS FROM MY JOURNAL

I reached my hand, took the despised sheets, and in a moment was in the street, wild, shaking my fist at that house now and then, as I stopped in my flight and turned to look back with a sort of nervous fear that he had followed me.

MY FIRST BOOK.

March 20, '71. Published! And without a publisher! No publisher's imprint is on my little book; a sort of illegitimate child, I have sent it forth to the press for a character. The type still stands, and if this goes well I can get a hearing and shall have a lot more of my rhymes set up, make a big book, and fire it right at the head of these stolid Britons.

March 26. Eureka! The *St. James Gazette* says "Arizonian" is by Browning!

Walter Thurnbury, Dickens's dear friend, and a better poet than I can hope to be, has hunted me up, and says big things of "Pacific Poems" in the *London Graphic*. Two splendid Irish enthusiasts from the Dublin University are at my side, stanch and earnest in their love. Now, the new book must come out! Yesterday I submitted a list of names for it—nine names—and one of my Irish friends settled on "Songs of the Sierras." And that, it is agreed, shall be the name of the new baby. Good! Good! I see a vast new sun shouldering up in the east over the dense fog of this mighty town. * * * I have met ———, the society poet of this city. I met him through Tom Hood. And he is a character—a sweet, gentle character, but so funny. Yet here I am on forbidden ground. The decent custom of Europe, which forbids personal mention of men in channels such

as this, cuts out nearly all that is of interest in journals. But this one man stands out like a star in his quaint and kind originality. He gave me letters to almost everybody, and I in turn gave him the manuscript of "Arizonian," written mostly on old letters and bills, for it was written in one night and at a single sitting—and I got out of paper. But I think this generous-hearted gentleman half regretted giving me the letters; and I shall not present all of them. He has already taken me to see Dean Stanley, and it is more than hinted that if I get on I am to meet Her Majesty the Queen at the Dean's in the Abbey some evening at tea. * * *

Dear, dear; you should have seen him last night as he stood with his back to the fire, fluttering his long, black coat-tails with one hand, while his other hand swung his eyeglass in a dizzy circle before his eyes. And he tiptoed up and he fluttered and swung as he said, with a final high flourish of his long black coat, "Yes, yes; I—I—I like the Americans. I must say that I have never found an American yet that was really vi-vi-vicious. I have found some that I thought were d-d-dreadful fools. But I never found one that I thought was really vi-vi-vi-vicious!"

THE END OF THE JOURNAL IN LONDON.

April 19. The book came out; and in the whirl of events that followed, the "notes" were neglected. It was a great day—a great year. Such a lot of favors and countless courtesies! For example, I had three letters in succession come to me signed "Dublin." I could not answer or even read all my letters, and so was not particularly disturbed or elated to find these letters from "Dublin," whoever

"Dublin" might be. But one of my young Irish friends discovered these letters one day, and fairly caught his breath! "His Grace, the Archbishop of Dublin! He wants you to breakfast with him. Why, your fortune is made!"

May 1. The doors of all social London are wide open. But somehow I am too full of concern about home to be very happy. * * * My dear elder brother is very ill at home.

London, May 3. I find here among the Pre-Raphaelites one prevailing idea, one delight—the love of the beautiful. It is in the air. At least I find it wherever the atmosphere of the Rossettis penetrates, and that seems to be in every work of art—beautiful art. I am to dine with Dante Rossetti! All the set will be there. I shall hear what they say. I shall listen well, for this love of the beautiful is my old love—my old lesson. I have read it by the light of the stars, under the pines, away down by the strange light on the sea, and even on the peaks of the Pacific—everywhere. Strange that it should be so in the air here. And they all seem intoxicated with it, as with something new, the fragrance of a new flower that has only now blossomed after years of waiting: a sort of century plant—a quarter of a century plant, maybe. For, nearly twenty-five years ago, I am told, these Pre-Raphaelites began to teach this love of the beautiful.

BACK IN AMERICA.

Easton, Pa., August 3. At "Dublin's" breakfast, I met Robert Browning, Dean Stanley, Lady Augusta, a lot more ladies, and a duke or two, and, after breakfast, "Dublin" read to me—with his five

beautiful daughters grouped about—from Browning, Arnold, Rossetti, and others, till the day was far spent. When I went away he promised to send me his books. He did so. I put them in my trunk, and did not open them till I got to America. Fancy my consternation as well as amazement and delight to find that this “Dublin” was Trench, the author of “Trench on Words.” Ah! why didn’t he sign his name Trench? for I knew that book almost by heart. * * * My brother is very ill.



RECOLLECTIONS OF THE ROSSETTI
DINNER

RECOLLECTIONS OF THE ROSSETTI DINNER

There is no thing that hath not worth;
There is no evil anywhere;
There is no ill on all this earth,
If man seeks not to see it there.



SEPTEMBER 28. I cannot forget that dinner with Dante Gabriel Rossetti, just before leaving London, nor can I hope to recall its shining and enduring glory. I am a better, larger man, because of it. And how nearly our feet are set on the same way. It was as if we were all crossing the plains, we the workers and lovers there, and I for a day's journey and night's encampment fell in with and conversed with the captains of the march.

But one may not give names and dates and details over there as here. The home is entirely a castle. The secrets of the board and fireside are sacred. And then these honest toilers and worshippers of the beautiful are shy, so shy and modest. But I like this decent English way of keeping your name down and out of sight till the coffin-lid hides your blushes—so modest these Pre-Raphaelites are that I should be in disgrace forever if I dared set down any living man's name.

But here are a few of the pearls picked up, as they were tossed about the table at intervals and sandwiched in between poems, songs, tales of love and lighter thoughts and things.

All London, or rather all the brain of London, the literary brain, was there. And the brain of all

the world, I think, was in London. These giants of thought, champions of the beautiful earth, passed the secrets of all time and all lands before me like a mighty panorama. All night so! We dined so late that we missed all relish for breakfast. If I could remember and write down truly and exactly what these men said, I would have the best and the greatest book that ever was written. I have been trying a week in vain. I have written down and scratched out and revised till I have lost the soul of it, it seems to me; no individuality to it; only like my own stuff. If I had only set their words down on paper the next day instead of attempting to remember their thoughts! Alas! the sheaves have been tossed and beaten about over sea and land for days and days, till the golden grain is gone, and here is but the straw and chaff.

The master sat silent for the most part; there was a little man away down at the other end, conspicuously modest. There was a cynical fat man, and a lean philanthropist—all sorts and sizes, but all lovers of the beautiful of earth. Here is what one, a painter, a ruddy-faced and a rollicking gentleman, remarked merrily to me as he poured out a glass of red wine near the beginning of the dinner:

“When travelling in the mountains of Italy, I observed that the pretty peasant women made the wine by putting grapes in a great tub, and then getting into this tub, barefooted, on top of the grapes, treading them out with their brown, bare feet. At first I did not like to drink this wine. I did not think it was clean. But I afterward watched these pretty brown women”—and here all leaned to listen at the mention of pretty brown women—“I watched these pretty brown women at their work

in the primitive wine-press, and I noticed that they always washed their feet—after they got done treading out the wine.”

All laughed at this, and the red-faced painter was so delighted that he poured out and swallowed another full glass. The master sighed now and then as he sat at the head of the table rolling a bit of bread between thumb and finger, and said, sitting close to me: “I am an Italian who has never yet seen Italy. *Belle Italia!*” * * *

By and by he quietly said that silence was the noblest attitude in all things; that the greatest poets refused to write, and that all great artists in all lines were above the folly of expression. A voice from far down the table echoed this sentiment by saying: “Heard melodies are sweet; but unheard melodies are sweeter.” “Written poems are delicious; but unwritten poems are divine,” cried the triumphant cynic. “What is poetry?” cries a neighbor. “All true, pure life is poetry,” answers one. “But the inspiration of poetry?” “The art of poetry is in books. The inspiration of poetry, in nature.” To this all agreed. * * * Then the master, bending close, said softly to me, “Poetry is soul set to music.” * * *

Then the master very quietly spoke: “And yet do not despise the books of man. All religions, said the Chinese philosophers, are good. The only difference is, some religions are better than others, and the apparent merit of each depends largely upon a man’s capacity for understanding it. This is true of poetry. All poetry is good. I never read a poem in all my life that did not have some merit, and teach some sweet lesson. The fault in reading the poems of man, as well as reading the poetry of

nature, lies largely at the door of the reader. Now, what do you call poetry?" and he turned his great Italian eyes tenderly to where I sat at his side.

"To me a poem is a picture," I answered.

Proud I was when a great poet then said: "And it must be a picture—if a good poem—so simple that you can understand it at a glance, eh? And see it and remember it as you would see and remember a sunset, eh?" "Aye," answered the master, "I also demand that it shall be lofty in sentiment and sublime in expression. The only rule I have for measuring the merits of a written poem, is by the height of it. Why not be able to measure its altitude as you measure one of your sublime peaks of America?"

He looked at me as he spoke of America, and I was encouraged to answer: "Yes, I do not want to remember the words. But I do want it to remain with me—a picture—and become a part of my life. Take this one verse from Mr. Longfellow:

"And the night shall be filled with music,
And the cares that infest the day
Shall fold up their tents like the Arabs,
And as silently steal away."

"Good!" cried the fat cynic, who, I am sure, had never heard the couplet before, it was so sweet to him. "Good! There is a picture that will depart from no impressible clay. The silent night, the far sweet melody falling on the weary mind, the tawny picturesque Arabs stealing away in the darkness, the perfect peace, the stillness and the rest! It appeals to all the Ishmaelite in our natures, and all the time we see the tents gathered up and the silent children of the desert gliding away in the gloaming."

A transplanted American, away down at the other

end by a little man among bottles, said: "The poem of *Evangeline* is a succession of pictures. I never read *Evangeline* but once." "It is a waste of time to look twice at a sunset," said Rossetti, *sotto voce*, and the end man went on: "But I believe I can see every picture in that poem as distinctly as if I had been the unhappy Arcadian; for here the author has called in all the elements that go to make up a perfect poem."

"When the great epic of this new, solid Saxon tongue comes to be written," said one who sat near and was dear to the master's heart, "it will embrace all that the new embraces; new and unnamed lands; ships on the sea; the still deep waters hidden away in a deep and voiceless continent; the fresh and fragrant wilderness; the curling smoke of the camp-fire; action, movement, journeys; the presence—the inspiring presence of woman; the ennobling sentiment of love, devotion, and devotion to the death; faith, hope and charity,—and all in the open air."

"Yes," said the master thoughtfully, "no great poem has ever been or ever will be fitted in a parlor, or even fashioned from a city. There is not room for it there."

"Hear! hear! you might as well try to grow a California pine in the shell of a peanut," cried I. Some laughed, some applauded, all looked curiously at me. Of course, I did not say it that well, yet I did say it far better. I mean I did not use the words so carefully, but I had the advantage of action and sympathy.

Then the master said, after a bit of reflection: "Homer's *Ulysses*, out of which have grown books enough to cover the earth, owes its immortality to

all this, and its out-door exercise. Yet it is a bloody book—a bad book, in many respects—full of revenge, treachery, avarice and wrong. And old Ulysses himself seems to have been the most colossal liar on record. But for all this, the constant change of scene, the moving ships and the roar of waters, the rush of battle and the anger of the gods, the divine valor of the hero, and, above all, and over all, like a broad, white-bosomed moon through the broken clouds, the splendid life of that one woman; the shining faith, the constancy, the truth and purity of Penelope—all these make a series of pictures that pass before us like a panorama, and we will not leave off reading till we have seen them all happy together again, and been assured that the faith and constancy of that woman has had its reward. And we love him, even if he does lie!”

How all at that board leaned and listened. Yet let me again and again humbly confess to you that I do him such injustice to try thus to quote from memory. After a while he said: “Take the picture of the old, blind, slobber-mouthed dog that has been driven forth by the wooers to die. For twenty years he has not heard the voice of his master. The master now comes, in the guise of a beggar. The dog knows his voice, struggles to rise from the ground, staggers toward him, licks his hand, falls, and dies at his feet.”

Such was the soul, heart, gentleness of this greatest man that I ever saw walking in the fields of art.

After a while they talked about the construction of poetry.

“As for the construction of a poem, I hold that there never was a long poem written continuously,”

said the master; "as a rule, great poems are built like Solomon's temple, section by section, and put together without the sound of the hammer. This brings us back to the assertion that all poems are pictures, and long poems only a succession of pictures strung together on some sweet story of devotion and love." And with this the master was a long time silent.

"Shining beads on a blessed rosary," piped in a little poet not before heard from, away down among the accumulating bottles, as he lifted his beaded glass of wine high in his hand and adjusted the glasses on his nose preparatory to drinking, lest they might fall into the glass.

"I find," said one, after a good deal of skirmishing and idle talk, "that great poems are oftener born of accident than design. On looking over the original manuscripts of "Childe Harold" at Newstead Abbey last summer, I noticed that Lord Byron had first written it "Childe Byron," instead of "Childe Harold." And it was clearly evident that it was not meant for publication at first, but only as a brief chronicle of his own sentiments and sad life on setting out on his pilgrimage."

Again the advocate of silence, the master, was heard: "To me every man or woman who loves the beautiful is a poet. The gift of expression is a separate affair altogether. I am certain that the greatest, sweetest, and the purest poets upon earth are silent people—silent as the flowers. Pictures of the beautiful are as frequent to all really refined natures as are the flowers of the field. Yet only one in millions has the gift, desire and power of expression."

"To me the savage or the negro is a truer poet

than the scholar of Oxford," cried a lover of Walt Whitman. "They may have been alike born with a love of the beautiful, but the scholar, shut up within the gloomy walls with his eyes to a dusty book, has forgotten the face of voiceless nature, and learned only the art of utterance. He has been at school all his life."

"Been at school all his life! Poor man! How ignorant he must be," sighed the fat cynic.

A great deal of merriment followed this, and finally some one talked of alliteration. But the great master sat silent, and did not venture to talk on this theme.

"As to the verbal construction of a poem," piped the little man among the fast accumulating bottles, "add all the decoration you can without covering up the proud proportions of your structure. The world is round, and we are getting back to the soft vowel sounds of the old Greek kings of thought, who, if they ever knew the art of rhyme, had the good sense to disdain it, and use only alliteration and soft, assonant words. Tennyson, Browning, Morris, Swinburne and the master, Rossetti, though they disagree in many things, are unanimous in alliteration and soft sounds. Take a familiar example from Tennyson:

"I hold this true what'er befall;
I feel it when I sorrow most;
'Tis better to have loved and lost,
Than never to have loved at all."

Here is not only soft, liquid alliteration, but the vowels fall in, all through the little quatrain, in a sad musical sort of a way that gives us both sentiment and song together." Then the man beyond

the bottles gave a verse from Atalanta and Calydon :

“Though the many lights dwindle to one light,
 There is help if the heavens have one;
 Though the skies be discrowned of the sunlight
 And the earth dispossessed of the sun,
 We have moonlight and sleep for repayment,
 When, refreshed as a bride and set free,
 With the stars and sea-winds in her raiment,
 Night sinks on the sea.”

I remember a long pause here; some changed seats; the dinner resolved itself into a sort of mass, or a blending together of souls that attracted souls; there was more wine, much smoke, some laughter, and some stories of love. But over all that was said or done or thought shone like a halo this one delight—the love of the beautiful.

By and by the master began, half sad, half humorously, and carelessly and indifferently threw out this little thought: “Hundreds of years ago a poet said, by way of illustration, and in a forceful argument for charity for all, for the good in all things, beauty in all things, that even the toad, repulsive as it seemed, has a jewel in its head. And so the dull, passive world accepted it literally, and has gone on saying, ‘The toad hath a jewel in its head.’ I suspect millions of toads have been killed by seekers after the traditional jewel. O my friends, go out in the cool of the evening in your garden, and there in the green grass of the fence corner fall down on your knees, and look the panting little toad in the face—look in his soft, tender, love-lit and liquid eyes, and you will understand. No, no; all jewels are not to be worn in rings and weighed in scales and sold at a pawn-shop. The prettiest jewels, God hangs on the grass, hides in the light of the soft

eyes of the toad, and forbids you to touch them. Oh, it is a beautiful, beautiful world! Only let us have capacity to see the beauty that is in it, and we will see nothing that is ugly at all—nothing that is evil at all.”



**FRAGMENTS FROM THE ENGLISH
PRESS**

FRAGMENTS FROM THE ENGLISH PRESS



SURELY have long since passed the days of vanity too often incident to youthful and ambitious scribes. Therefore I venture to here insert some of the generous words of welcome given by the British to a stranger from a strange land, long ago, in order to indicate what we should do here with our own, if we are ever to have a real and sincere American literature. We must not only be sincere, serious if you please, but we must try to be just and generous; as the British were over generous with me. But how do we receive our own? Half a century ago, one-half the States stood arrayed against the other, and "no good thing can come out of Nazareth."

After a time vitriol was laid aside for sarcasm. And to this day the one aim of the average reviewer is to say something smart, ugly, vicious, even vile, of the aspiring but most sensitive being ever born upon earth.

No, I am not answering back. I never answered back one single word and never will. I am only insisting that we be more sincere, less superficial, silly, if we are to have a literature. We must not only drop personalities, political and sectional animosities, but we must have a Laureate, a Poet Laureata, in every State of the Union. For nearly every State in the Union is still awaiting its Columbus.

The Spectator.

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Mr. Miller's work has a real significance beyond what appears on the face of it. It brings the first fruits, and the promise of a new soil. It shows a true revival of primitive life in its vigor, simplicity, and occasional rudeness. Its merits and defects are those of confident and over-lusty youth, and the defects, with one exception, which will presently be mentioned, are venial.

It is not pretended that Mr. Miller's poetry, or even his language, is faultless. There are obvious inequalities, blemishes, and slips of language; much work roughly, some incorrectly done; but in spite of all drawbacks, the fact remains that when one has taken up the volume it is very difficult to put it down.

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That which is first to fix the attention as a prominent quality in Mr. Miller's poems is the faculty of transmitting direct and vivid impressions of outward nature. In the older countries, the value of an artist's observations is in danger of decreasing at the same time that the perfection of the instruments for recording them is being increased. It is difficult for any one within the immediate influence of a European culture, if he does not possess original power of a very rare quality, not to mix up his actual experience with preconceived ideas of what his experience ought to be; and therefore in the world of art, not less than in any other world, great is the multitude of those who seek their life and lose it. On the other hand, the best part of Mr. Miller's work belongs to a stage of thought at which seeking has hardly begun; he can lose his

life in nature, and has the reward of finding it. This description of a storm breaking, which occurs very early in the volume, is enough to show the presence of no common power:

I lay in my hammock; the air was heavy
 And hot, and threatening; the very heaven
 Was holding its breath; and bees in a bevy
 Hid under my thatch; and birds were driven
 In clouds to the rocks in a hurried whirr
 As I peer'd down by the path for her;
 She stood like a bronze bent over the river,
 The proud eyes fix'd, the passion unspoken,
 When the heavens broke like a great dyke broken.
 Then, ere I fairly had time to give her
 A shout of warning, a rushing of wind
 And the rolling of clouds and a deafening din,
 And a darkness that had been black to the blind
 Came down, as I shouted, "Come in! come in!
 Come under the roof, come up from the river,
 As up from the grave—come now, or come never!"
 The tassell'd tops of the pines were as weeds,
 The torn woods rock'd like to lake-side reeds,
 And the world seem'd darken'd and drown'd forever.

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Mr. Miller is often happy in dealing with single phases of emotion. There is true and spontaneous poetry in this painting (from *With Walker in Nicaragua*):

O passion-tossed and bleeding past,
 Part now, part well, part wide apart,
 As ever ships on ocean slid
 Down, down the sea, hull, sail, and mast;
 And in the album of my heart
 Let hide the pictures of your face,
 With other pictures in their place,
 Slid over like a coffin's lid.

But to return to the power of sympathy with nature, by which the new poet most chiefly makes good his claim; the same freshness of vision, which

gives such force and truth to his direct description, works in his mind a revival of the old myth-forming energy. His soul goes forth to the sun, or the ocean, or the mountain snows, as did the soul of ancient men in days long past. In short, he makes myths over again, quite unaffected by their having been made and fixed in mythology once or many times before. Thus he looks at the mountains after sunset:

When the red-curtain'd west has bent red as with weeping,
Low over the couch where the prone day lay dying,
I have stood with brow lifted, confronting the mountains
That held their white faces of snow to the heavens,
And said, "It is theirs to array them so purely,
Because of their nearness to the temple eternal";
And times I have said, "They are fair resting places
For the dear, weary dead on their way up to heaven."

The peculiar unrhymed meter of this extract will be noticed. Mr. Miller employs it in long passages, and with considerable effect. We find, again, a very old piece of sun-mythology revived in all the vigor of youth, and joyfully ignoring the fate of its eastern kindred, how they have died and been embalmed, and are now in process of dissection by comparative philology:

Where mountains repose in their blueness,
Where the sun first lands in his newness,
And marshals his beams and his lances,
Ere down to the vale he advances
On the terrible night in his way,
And slays him, and with his sword deftly
Hews from him the beautiful day,
Lay nestled the town of Renalda.

We must go a long way back to parallel this thorough an unartificial transfusion of nature with human life. The sea, too, is alive as the moderns can seldom make him:

The warm sea fondled with the shore,
And laid his white face on the sands.

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The Athenæum.

There is a current notion that American poetry should be different in kind from ours—should, in the slang of criticism, “be racy of the soil from which it springs.” Rivers of prodigious length, vast prairies and forests, and huge mountain-ranges, must, it is believed, reflect themselves in the productions of the native poet. We hesitate to share this belief. The bold pioneers who first penetrate the wilderness are too deeply engrossed in material concerns to occupy themselves with the divine art; and, when the wilderness becomes the seat of a dense population, its inhabitants live under conditions such as we.

As far, at least, as literature is concerned, the Americans are not, as Mr. Lowell contends, of yesterday. The man of the New World, inheriting our language, inherits also our history, traditions, religion, modes of thought; and these no physical peculiarities of country are influential enough to countervail. He is heir to Shakespeare equally with the man of Middlesex or of Warwick. Of this the volume under notice is corroboration. Mr. Miller has spent his whole life in the wild woods and mountains of America, and yet is not an American of the type anticipated. “Polished bronzes,” “chiselled marble,” “Italian skies,” “Grecian forms,” have meaning to him; and he has had dreams of dead and living poets the memory of which remains.

First in place, and, we may add, in excellence, is

“Arizonian,” so named from that western territory within which the scene is laid.

* * * * *

He resembles Mr. Browning in novel and apt metaphors taken from objects high or low, common or uncommon, but always new and forcible, and often quaint—making one smile at the sudden turn. So also he is like Mr. Browning in his homely strokes of humor.

The Saturday Review.

Whatever the faults of style which disfigure Mr. Miller's poems—and they are many and flagrant—there can be no doubt that he possesses the genuine poetic faculty. He writes because he cannot help it—the best reason of all—perhaps the only justifiable reason for composing poetry. The snowy Sierra and the tropical cañon, the roving, adventurous borderer's life, the stirring tales of hunt and foray, all these supplied materials pregnant with romance and poetry, and only required to be transmuted into words. This task Mr. Miller has attempted, and the fact that his lines glow with tropical passion, and that his descriptions transport us in imagination to the scenes among which they were composed, compels us to forgive him for the lawlessness with which he tramples on the conventional limitations of art.

The poems are but seven in number, and amongst them the first two are, to our mind, considerably the best. The first is called “Arizonian.”

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“With Walker in Nicaragua” is a passionate story of love and adventure. The lawless and romantic

career of the great filibuster has exercised a powerful fascination over the poet, and there is a fine western twang about the rhymes and expressions in the panegyric of Walker with which the poem opens.

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The whole poem glows with the passion and ardor of youth. We are carried on in loose, swinging, vigorous lines, which tell of the victorious march of the adventurers, the discovery of the hoary Temple of the Sun buried deep within the quinine wood, the rest in the white-walled city by the sea, the long sweet days of rapturous love. Then comes the reverse; the enemy swoops down on the unsuspecting city, the remnant of the little band are driven bleeding to the sea, and scarcely escape in their boats; the hapless Montezuman maid, who had been parted from her lover in his hurried flight, tries to follow his ship, but her tiny boat upsets whilst she is trying in vain to attract his attention, and it is only the next morning that he hears from a rough seaman of her death.

In these two poems there is some attempt at a plot and construction. Passionate though they are, the artist is still master of his material. But in the four which follow, the formative controlling element which is essential to a work of art is almost wholly submerged in a swaying, tumultuous flood of incoherent feeling and imagery. There flits before us a wild phantasmagoria of scenes of passion and turmoil, in which the last representatives of an expiring race—as in “Californian” and the “Last of the Taschastas”—fall in a desperate, unavailing struggle with the pale-faced conqueror; or, as in “Ina” and the “Lay of the Tall Alcalde,” men weary of civilization and sickened by perfidy desert

their homes for the freer life of the hunter or the savage. The volume ends with a short piece entitled "Burns and Byron," a tribute to the genius of the two singers whose shrines our western poet visits when he lands on the shores of the Old World.

Of the two poets whose names are thus coupled, there can be no doubt which is the one with whom Mr. Miller's genius has most affinity, and to whose influence he is most deeply indebted. The great leader of the English "Sturm und Drang" epoch has been deposed from the throne which he once occupied, and, in the reaction which has followed, we are perhaps in some danger of forgetting the incalculable boon which he conferred on our national literature when he struck off from it the icy fetters of spurious classicalism, and set passion once more bounding through the shrunken and lowered veins of the English muse.

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The Pall Mall Gazette.

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Voices from the outposts of civilization have been sent up before now, and reached the ears of such as are attentive to poetical curiosities. But no poetry of the backwoods or the far West has ever yet had the sound of this. * * * Mr. Miller has lived the wildest of wild lives; has been a filibuster; and the whole atmosphere of his experience is that of a sudden semi-civilization unchained, with no law and the clash of a hundred violent needs, upon the scene of a grandiose and tropical nature. His poetry, whatever else has to be said of it, is inspired straight by the life which he has known, and thus comes to us with a double

freshness—as representing human subjects in an ethical state quite unembarrassed by the restraints of old societies, or any code except a very crude one of honor, and as describing physical nature of a type as unfamiliar as it is impressive.

A different standard has to be applied to literature having its source in life and experience alone, or nearly alone, and to literature which has its chief source in the precedent and stimulus of other literature. The poetry now before us is of the former kind, and may therefore be forgiven many weaknesses such as would be unpardonable in poetry begotten, as in cultivated societies is in great part necessarily the case, of the study and example of preceding poets. * * * Living between the Sierra Nevada and the Pacific, both such exploits and such scenery are ready to his hand; they are exciting, but none the less usual; and they rouse him to poetical pitch because of their intrinsic power upon the imagination simply, not because of any defiant self-consciousness or sense of revolt which they carry with them. Walker, the actual filibuster chief, is regarded in the same vein of somewhat ranting romance and melodramatic ideality as Conrad, the fictitious pirate; but then Mr. Miller has had the advantage of having known and lived with Walker under circumstances that made him a natural product of society in his time and place.

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Enough has been said and cited to show that in Mr. Joaquin Miller we have to do with a true, although with an untrained poet, in whom neither senses, imagination, nor language are deficient, and whose work, over and above the spirited novelty of its subject-matter, shares the large spirit of winds

and mountain-tops, that range of vastness and sense of the ulterior and immeasurable, which was the strength of Byron, and which has been wanting from much of our best contemporary verse.

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The Illustrated London News.

Nobody can state distinctly what is poetry; what it is not is far easier to predicate. It is not grammar, nor elegant diction, nor melodious sound, or perfect rhythm, or far-fetched fancies, or pretty conceits, though we know from daily experience that the majority of verse-writers think it is something of the kind, or at any rate a mixture of many things of the kind. True poetry affects one just as an electric shock; you feel it and confess its power, but you have a difficulty in explaining wherein its force consists and how it operates. * * *

There is oftentimes a ruggedness, and sometimes a vulgarity, discernible; but what of that? Parnassus itself is rugged; and not everything that is common is unclean. But if it be poetry to paint in words, to the accompaniment of rough, perhaps, but appropriate and pleasant music, scenes so that one may seem to see them, and sensations so that one may seem to feel them, and deeds so that one may seem to do them, there is poetry in "Songs of the Sierras."

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The Academy.

This is a truly remarkable book. To glance through its pages is to observe a number of

picturesque things picturesquely put, expressing in a vivid flowing form and melodious words, and indicating strange, outlandish, and romantic experiences. The reader requires no great persuasion to leave off mere skimming and set-to at regular perusal; and, when he does so, he finds the pleasurable impression confirmed and intensified.

The volume, of some 300 pages, contains only seven poems. The last of these—a tribute to the glorious memories of Burns and Byron—is comparatively short; all the rest are compositions of some substantial length, and of a narrative character, though *Ina*—considerably the longest of all—assumes a very loose form of dramatic dialogue. Mr. Miller treats of the scenes, and personages, and the aspects of life that he knows—knows intimately and feels intensely; and very novel scenes, strange personages, and startling aspects these are. This fact alone would lend to his book a singular interest, which is amply sustained by the author's contagious ardor for what he writes about, and his rich and indeed splendid powers of poetic presentment. A poet, whose domestic hearth is a hut in an unfathomable cañon, whose forest has been a quinine wood permeated by monkeys,

Like shuttles hurried through and through
The threads a hasty weaver weaves,

and whose song-bird is a cockatoo, and to whom these things, and not the converse of them, are all the genuine formative experience and typical realities or images of a life, is sure to tell us something which we shall be both curious and interested to think over. There is an impassable gap between the alien *couleur locale* of even so great a poet as Victor Hugo in such a work as *Les Orientales*, and

the native recipiency of one like our California author, whose very blood and bones are related to the things he describes, and from whom a perception and a knowledge so extremely unlike our own are no more separable than his eye, and his brain. Such being the exceptionable nature of Mr. Miller's subject-method, the best way of obtaining some specific idea of his work, both in its beauties and in its defects—which latter no doubt are neither few nor insignificant—may be to give a brief account of his stories.

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Excitement and ambition may be called the twin geniuses of Mr. Miller's poetical character. Everything is to him both vital and suggestive; and some curious specimens might be culled of the fervid interfusion of its external nature and the human soul in his descriptive passages. The great factors of the natural world—the sea, the mountains, the sun, moon, and stars—become personalities, animated with an intense life and a dominant possession. He loves the beasts and birds, and finds them kin to him; a snake has its claim of blood-relationship.

The quick leaves quiver'd, and the sunlight danced;
As the boy sang sweet, and the birds said "Sweet";
And the tiger crept close, and lay low at his feet,
And he sheath'd his claws in the sun, entranced.

The serpent that hung from the sycamore bough,
And sway'd his head in a crescent above,
Had folded his neck to the white limb now,
And fondled it close like a great black love.

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There is little space, and not much occasion, for dwelling on verbal or other minute defects. The

swing and melody of the verse are abundant; yet many faulty lines or rhymes, with some decided perversities in this way, could be cited; along with platitudes of phase, or odd and inadmissible words. All these are minor matters. Mr. Miller has realized his poetic identity under very exceptional conditions, highly favorable to spirit and originality, but the contrary, so far as completion or the accepted rules of composition are concerned. He is a poet, and an admirable poet. His first works prove it to demonstration, and superabundantly; and no doubt his future writings will reinforce the proof with some added maturity and charm. He is not the sort of man to be abashed or hurt by criticism. Let me add that the less attention he pays to objection, even if well-founded, and the more he continues to write out of the fulness of his own natural gifts, the better it will probably be for both himself and his readers. America may be proud of him.

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The School Board Chronicle.

In an educational organ, such as the *School Board Chronicle*, no apology is needed to our readers for introducing to their notice the most recent creations of the Muse, when her songs are inspired by genius, and charged with a worthy mission to humanity. The true poet is rarer than the black swan, and, like that bird of sable plume, he is a child of nature, and not the creation of art. Education and culture may do much for the genuine bard, by polishing and bringing out in their full strength and beauty the capacities implanted by

nature; but no degree of culture, no system of education, can animate the singer with that *vivada vis animi* by which alone the poet realizes

The vision and faculty divine,

unless Nature has first breathed into his soul the breath of inspiration, and filled it with the fulness of her power. In this country we have one great poet living amongst us, the Laureate Tennyson, and a thousand imitators of his measured music, which has won its way, sweetly and softly, into the heart of England. The imitators of Tennyson or of any other great poet are not without their mission. They subserve a good and useful end in order of the world, after their own fashion, and in their own generation. Now, we take it that the studied imitation of our great poets is the sincerest of all homage to their greatness, and is of extreme value in helping us to measure that ascendancy over the mind of man, that control over the powers, the passions, the purpose, and the pursuits of their fellow-creatures, exercised by the highest masters of poetry. The imitator of a great and true poet brings out into a stronger and clearer light the most characteristic, and therefore most inimitable, beauties of the poet imitated, by contrast and juxtaposition, and so serves as a foil to the object of his imitation.

Now, in America all this is reversed. In that Republican State there is no living acknowledged monarch of poets, no myriad band of flattering imitators, of devout worshippers. Hitherto America has produced no poet worthy of the name, while the name of her poetasters is legion. The most gifted of American singers are great, not as *creators* of

home-bred poetry, but as *translators* of foreign poetry. It is a remarkable fact that the best translations we have in the English language from German and Italian poetry, have come to us from the pen of Longfellow; and the best translation of Homer's "Iliad" has been given to us by the hand of William Cullen Bryant. It is equally remarkable that no American has ever yet ventured to write a *long poem*, which, with Keats, we look upon as the surest test of poetic invention and of the most transcendent poetic genius. An "Iliad," an "Æneid," or a "Paradise Lost," are tasks in poetry unattempted yet by the blood of American singers.

With such facts before us, we must confess that we opened Mr. Joaquin Miller's "Songs of the Sierras" with the full expectation of finding the usual style of twaddle and sing-song printed and published by the zealous devotees of the Muse in the United States.

However, we must confess that never were our expectations more delightfully falsified than as we read poem after poem of this charming and original singer, who, to do him justice, has far outstripped all his rivals across the Atlantic. Whether Mr. Miller deemed that the poet, like the prophet of old, has no honer whatever in his own country, or that at least he could command a fairer hearing in England or in the Great West; or whether, writing for all who speak the tongue of England, he deemed it best "to leave the woods of the Great West, and, seeking the capital of the world, to publish in London," is a question we are in no position to solve. Of one point, however, we feel certain; that in England he may safely reckon upon having a fair trial before a bar of enlightened and honorable

criticism, which, for integrity, impartiality, and ability, has no equal in the whole world of literature.

* * * * *

The main characteristics of Mr. Miller's poetry are freshness and power. Originality of conception, the highest of all poetical gifts, is his own. He copies nothing; he imitates no one. Nature and circumstance have made him a poet. He has traveled in tracts almost unknown to civilized man; he has lived amidst scenes and societies rich to overflowing in all the grander elements which feed the soul with poetic fancies.

* * * * *

In entering upon the seven poems before us, we feel ourselves in a new land of enchantment. We are brought face to face with the magnificence of tropical climates and tropical skies, with human nature, too, under strange and stirring circumstances of romance—now “melting to softness,” now “maddened to crime,”—all set forth before our very eyes in the splendor of that light which only beams from the glowing imagination of the true poet. His subjects are drawn from his immediate surroundings,—they are inspired by a full and fervent admiration of nature, by a penetrating knowledge of mankind.

* * * * *

The Evening Standard.

The gifted author of these poems has pursued a singular course in leaving America, his native land, and “seeking the capital of the world to publish” the poems before us. Whether he felt that a poet, like a prophet, has no honor in his own country,

except in death, when his sepulchre may be gar-
nished, and the marble shaped by the chisel of the
genius to immortalize the features which in life
commanded no respect—this, we are not told.
* * * We give Mr. Miller merely his due when
we say that his poetry is by far the most original
and powerful that has yet been heard from beyond
the Atlantic. It has a twofold originality about it.
The stories, which make up the subject-matter, are
original—extremely original—and the style of
poetry in which they are embodied is a style which
belongs to Mr. Miller, and Mr. Miller alone. His
metres, his metaphors, his fluency and rapidity, and
the multifarious grace and faults of his verse, are
all his own. In no poet of modern days can we find
so much originality, and so little that is tracable
to either modern or ancient sources. Mr. Miller
writes from what he has seen with his own eyes,
and heard with his own ears; he has drawn from
the fountain of his own inspiration, from his own
feelings and fancies, tempered and touched by a
thousand influences of strange climes and charac-
ters, and circumstances unknown to the range of
experience which fall to the lot of most versifiers;
as the poet tells us in his introductory lines:—

Because the skies were blue, because
The sun in fringes of the sea
Was tangled, and delightfully
Kept dancing on as in a waltz,
And tropic trees bowed to the seas,
And bloomed and bore, years through and through
And birds in blended gold and blue
Were thick and sweet as swarming bees,
And sang as if in Paradise,
And all that Paradise was spring—
Did I too sing with lifted eyes,
Because I could not choose but sing.

What we like most in these poems, independently of their rare originality, is a certain passionate earnestness of purpose, a dignified scorn of trifling, and a simple directness of thought and feeling, which make their way to our hearts at once.

* * * * *

The Westminster Review.

The same characteristics, leaving out the coarseness which marked Walt Whitman's poetry, may, to a certain extent, be found in Mr. Miller's. He observed nature at first hand. Like Whitman, he reminds us of no one else. A rough wild humor gives infinite spirit to his strongly-marked, though by no means highly-finished, characters. They behave not like men whom we are accustomed to meet, but still like men whom we can very well imagine living among the backwoods and mountains. He presents them to us in the rough. They chew and spit. Still they are men. The same may be said of his sketches of nature. They are thoroughly fresh and original, drawn with free bold strokes. Those who overlooked the great faults in Whitman's poetry for the picturesque style, the vigorous metaphors, the clear-cut description of scenery, and that thorough zest for nature in the backwoods and wilds, will welcome and enjoy Mr. Miller. A short specimen of his rough, quaint style will, however, convey a clearer notion of his poetry than pages of our description. Here, then, is a Pre-Raphaelite picture:—

Two little girls, with brown feet bare,
And tangled, tossing, yellow hair,
Play'd on the green; fantastic drest,

Around a great Newfoundland brute,
 That lay half-resting on his breast,
 And with his red mouth open'd wide,
 Would make believe that he would bite,
 As they assailed him left and right,
 And then sprang to the other side,
 And filled with shouts the willing air.

Natural, unaffected poetry of this kind is rare in the literature of any country, and America may well be proud of having discovered a new poet in Mr. Miller.

* * * * *

The Dark Blue.

The first thing which moves the reader with delight on dipping into Mr. Miller's writings is, doubtless, their novelty of subject and imagery. We have not hitherto had any writer who, living in the utmost West, and moulded by its influences, has offered us any gift of songs; and it is a fresh and delicious experience to be brought face to face with the life and beauty of lands where the slough of minds has not accumulated, and Nature tells more of God's life than of man's. But mere novelty of imagery or subject would in itself be powerless to produce pleasure such as these poems yield. Poetry reveals all things through the poet's peculiar nature, which subdues them to hues of its own, as the green wave the white rocks under it. It is because we feel the subjects he sings of through Mr. Miller's own soul, and this is the soul of a fervent poet, that they assume so great a vividness and beauty for us. We are conscious at the first breath that we are in the presence of a God-moulded poet-mind. The living air of poetry greets us like the sea-smelling

wind as we cross the seaward mountains. The first demand of literary criticism is satisfied—the singer has a right to sing, because his passion has impelled him.

Whatever he may do in the future, his book is destined to live long. So long as the early days of Anglo-Saxon civilization in the farthest West continue to interest the world, men's fingers will wander through the pages of these poems. But on the higher grounds of true poetical excellence they will endure, for they have about them a beauty unquestionable, and one wholly their own; a perennial beauty—not such as will cease to seem beautiful after much handling and familiarity; a beauty as imperishable as the peaks of the mountains or the melodies of the sea.

* * * * *

The London Sunday Times.

We do not recall a first volume containing more of the matter of poetry, and less of form. Music the poems undoubtedly have, but it is a tameless weird kind of a song, which none can subject to laws or explain by notation. Mr. Miller's music is, in fact, beside that of his poetic brethren, like the mustang, whose flight he sings, beside the trained steeds of civilization. Its movements have savage ease, grace, and swiftness, but it can break into no known form of progress, and can neither trot nor gallop in approved fashion. Now and then passages of delightful harmony are encountered, but bluff or boulder-stone check the progress, and the rough, broken gallop is soon resumed. Leaving, however, the question of form, and coming to that of matter,

there is room for unbounded praise. Such fire, such glow, such color, and such passion as the new poet displays are rare among masters of poetry; and imagination, fervent and splendid, is not rarely to be discovered. * * * "Arizonian," with which the book commences, is a noble poem.

* * * * *

So long have we dallied over this first and most exquisite poem, we have left ourselves little space to occupy with those which follow. "With Walker in Nicaragua" is intensely powerful and dramatic, and full of truly splendid pictures. The comparisons in this poem have the boldness characteristic of the true poet, who, with his magic insight and power, can stoop low as he will with no fear of touching the commonplace. Here is an account of a journey through the Nicaraguan Woods, we see

How ran the monkeys through the leaves!
How rushed they through, brown-clad and blue,
Like shuttles hurried through and through
The threads a hasty weaver weaves."

or watch

How wide and wild with wonder stood
The proud mustangs with bannered mane,
And necks that never knew a rein,
And nostrils lifted high and blown.

Here are six lines more, this time not of description:

And she was rich with blood and gold,
More rich in blood grown overbold
From its own consciousness of strength;
How warm! O not for any cause
Could I declare how warm she was,
In her brown beauty and hair's length.

The reflection on life in this poem, and the description of the catastrophe, have marvelous beauty. Quite similar in spirit are the poems that follow, "Californian" and "The Last Taschastas"; full of glowing color, and ablaze with golden splendor of light. The tale of "The Tall Alcalde" is more touching, and has sweet, sad pathos, augmenting and deepening to the time when the lover revisits the tomb of his beloved, hoping to find the flowers blooming he had planted:—

* * * * *

Chamber's Journal.

A singer from the far West.—There are few conventional expressions more frequently heard in the hush of dull dinner-parties, or in the interval between the songs in the drawing-room, than that "this is not an age for poetry," or that "poetry is dying out." They are not very wise persons who utter it; but still, by reason of constant iteration, the thing is believed—by those who do not know true poetry when they read it, but like "a little music" after dinner. As a matter of fact, there probably never were so many poets—real ones in our own country as at present.

* * * * *

In the songs of Bret Harte, for instance, recently noticed in this *Journal*, the Railway Navy, the Gold-digger, and even the professional Gambler, have been made to give up an unsuspected store of valor, unselfishness, and the fine feeling, and the conventional ideas of "sentiment" and "romance"—but by no means to the loss of what is genuinely good and generous—have been scattered to the

winds. We have now to welcome a true poet in the marvelous guise of a Nicaraguan Filibuster. * * * He was a born poet, and has come to Europe for an audience for his songs.

He will secure a large one; for not only are they good—some of them even marvelously good—but upon subjects about which civilized persons know nothing, or have been content to take for granted the superficial accounts of them from travelers or journalists.

* * * * *

With Walker in Nicaragua is our author's most characteristic poem, but there are others almost equally good. *Arizonian* is a charming poem, and Mr. Miller's volume altogether a most welcome and striking production. That he has lived in the scenes he so graphically and musically describes, we should have no doubt, even if we had not his own word for the fact; but he needs no apology "for the bold act of a nameless young man leaving the woods of the Great West, and seeking the capital of the great world to publish." There is always a welcome in it for stirring and melodious song.

* * * * *

Frazer's Magazine.

We have already noticed, as excellences of Mr. Miller's, the strong living humanity with which his poems are impregnated, and also his admirable appreciation of Nature. Clearness of thought and expression, in an age whose customary song out-Delphis Delphi, is a feature in Mr. Miller's Muse as grateful as it is unusual. We can only trust that, now that she is amongst us, her vision may continue

to keep clear of the infection befogment of our modern mysticism.

Mr. Miller it at times affected, for all his simplicity. This affectation is, however, chiefly observable in a straining after a species of verbal assonance peculiar to himself. There is, for example, too much self-consciousness in these otherwise beautiful lines:

And the strained heart-strings wear bare and brittle,
 And the fond hope dieth, so long deferr'd,
 And the fair hope lieth in the heart interr'd,
 Stiff and cold in its coffin of lead;
 For you promise so great and you gain so little;
 For you promise so great of glory and gold,
 And gain so little that the hands grow cold;
 And for glory and gold you gain instead
 A fond heart sicken'd and a fair hope dead.

* * * * *

The ripen'd fruit a fragrance shed
 And hung in hand-reach overhead,
 In nest of blossoms on the shoot,
 The bending shoot that bore the fruit.

Elsewhere this iteration of sounds is no doubt introduced with the finest effect, and indeed constitutes one of the chief graces of Mr. Miller's rhythm.

* * * * *

The Evening Post.

I have letters by me which tell the story of the strange and romantic life of Joaquin Miller, the newest of the California poets who have so recently come suddenly to the surface and at once been ranked with the geniuses of the country, and which

pleasantly sketch his short but remarkable career in London, and give altogether the most perfect idea of the man that can be got without seeing and studying him. Of these, the fullest and best, the most interesting and satisfactory, and the most critical, is by George Francis Armstrong, of Dublin, a man of fine culture, a critic of ability and reputation, and a contributor to the leading English magazines and literary papers. It was written to a friend in answer to inquiries concerning the personal history of Miller, with whom he became, it seems, quite intimate during his stay in London. Of his origin, Mr. Armstrong says:—

“When the earliest of the numerous favorable notices of his works appeared in London, he said to me, with an enthusiasm which he did not care to hide, ‘This is worth more to me than gold; I will send it to my parents’; and when I asked him where his parents were, he said, ‘They have herds of horses and cattle, and dwell on the Willamette, in Oregon. They are dear, pious old people, and have never believed in me, but they will now.’ Once he stopped me opposite the window of an old print-shop in Museum street, and pointed out a portrait of Witt, a famous leader of German peasant insurgents in a former century. He said this Witt was an ancestor of his on his mother’s side. His grandfather on the other side fell in the last war with Great Britain, a private soldier.”

* * * * *

From the Athenæum.

“Songs of the Sun-Lands” is, it will be seen, similar in character to “Songs of the Sierras,”

previously published. The same kind of materials is used, and the same kind of faults and excellence in their use is observable. Mr. Miller's muse in this, its second flight, has taken the same direction as in its first essay, but, upon the whole, we think, with a stronger wing. The new work gives evidence that the author has not, as was feared, intensified his former mannerism, but has profited by the advice of friends and critics.

* * * * *

From the Academy.

Mr. Miller has a faculty of making himself felt through what he writes, and we quit his poems with a mingled sense of admiration and regret; admiration of his really great powers; regret that he seems unable to pursue one of two courses in their application, etc.

* * * * *

From the Westminster Review.

We some time ago called especial attention to this new American poet's first work, "The Songs of the Sierras," nor do we repent of our criticism. He has perhaps lost something of that boldness, and that flavor of originality, which in a certain way reminded one of Walt Whitman without his special weaknesses and extravagances. Still, to counterbalance this loss, he has gained a certain polish. Yet here we perceive a danger. But Mr. Miller must be careful that he does not buy elegance at too dear a price. We ourselves prefer the roughness of the backwoods of America to all the

drawing-room conventionalities of Europe. We prefer Mr. Joaquin Miller's native reed-pipe to any guitar. The most perfect poem in the present collection is without doubt "The Iles of the Amazons." Here we see Mr. Miller at his best. Here he has put forth his real strength. It is, in short, a poem which will live.

* * * * * * *

From the Standard.

No poetry of the present age has any claim to the unconventional freedom, the supreme independence, the spontaneity, the bold and vigorous originality, the all-pervading passion, the unresting energy, and the prodigal wealth of imagery which stamp the poetry before us. * * * For further specimens of Mr. Miller's present poems we must send our readers to the volume itself, which is, with all its faults, a very garden of delight, adorned everywhere as it is with the fairest blooms of fancy, and breathing everywhere as it does of the sweetest and purest inspirations of the muse.

* * * * * * *

From the London Sunday Times.

The success both in England and America of Mr. Joaquin Miller's "Songs of the Sierras" has been uncontested. The tide of passionate life with which they were charged, and the fervor of poetic appreciation and sympathy which they displayed, combined with the startling beauty and power of portions of the workmanship to render men insensible to irregularities and inequalities of style.

* * * Here we bid farewell to Mr. Miller's delightful volume. A pleasanter companion into the enchanted gardens of poetry we do not seek. He knows

each lane and every alley green,
Dingle or bushy dell of the wild wood,
And every bosky bourn from side to side.

and he conducts us to scenes to which we have no other guide. That Mr. Miller had poetic inspiration his first volume abundantly proved. That his verse will not be a mere well at which the traveller can drink once ere pursuing his journey, but a full river of song hurrying through forest and meadow, and bearing with it carol of bird and scent of flower and hay, is now sufficiently established.

From the Bookseller.

Resembling his previously published collection, in that the verses are principally descriptive of strange, far-away countries, and contain numerous bright, beautiful pictures of external nature, these songs of the sun-lands will be warmly welcomed as the riper efforts of a real poet. * * * And so we might proceed through poem after poem, finding images of great and sterling poetic value. Nor, perhaps, would it be difficult to discover some that might be called trivial and poor; but we prefer to judge a writer by his best rather than his worst; and Mr. Miller's best lines stamp him a true man,—a man of sympathetic instincts and deep reverence for all that is high and noble in nature and humanity.

* * * * *

From the Nonconformist.

Of all American poetry in recent years, that of Mr. Joaquin Miller is the freshest. He is a new poet in the proper sense of the term. He owes allegiance to no transatlantic masters, and he is no servile imitator of the modern minstrelsy of our own country. In outward form—in the mechanism of his poetry—he of course follows the fashion of the times; but the spirit is new, the tone is individual and distinct. In his poems, for the first time the prairies, the Sierras, and the new and old life of the Far West of America have been fairly poetized, so to speak. * * * “Songs of the Sun-Lands” contains nothing, perhaps, superior to “Arizonian” in Mr. Miller’s “Songs of the Sierras”; yet it contains no poem so crude as one or two poems in his former volume. The best here is undoubtedly “The Isles of the Amazons.” * * * Notwithstanding these defects, however, we maintain that we have in Mr. Joaquin Miller a new poet, who with more culture and higher aims is fully capable of producing in the future a poem that the world will not willingly let die.

* * * * *

From the Globe.

His poetry is in no danger of suffering neglect, nor is it likely to lack admirers. By his earlier volume, “The Songs of the Sierras,” he fully proved his right to the influence of the fresh thought and freer music his verse contained. That, in truth, was the essence of Mr. Miller’s achievement. He had somehow broken from the ordinary standards

of poetical composition without sacrifice of musical effect. The verse was larger and with less restraint than could be found in other singers, moving with more continuous flow, and advancing in a cadence always varied and not recurring. Something instructive in the style seemed to image both the singer and the thing sung of, so that we were influenced not so much by this or that particular thought as by romantic and picturesque effect of the whole, with its fearless and confident description, and its untamed yet tuneful melody. To follow the poet was like following a keen, swift rider, who rides eagerly, it matters not whither, and who attracts us by a wild grace and a beautiful skill as he rushes through scenes of luxuriant loveliness that would cause a less impetuous horseman to pause and linger. That was the character of his verse as we knew it in the earlier volume, and that also is its character here. What was best in the earlier work is retained in this, and it still remains the best the poet can do.

* * * * *

From the Morning Post.

The author appears to be a true poet, with all the natural fire and tenderness—the spark and dew—that fall from Helicon. * * * In the present collection of poems, he has largely contributed to his own fame, which was already very great, and to the pleasure of all who can listen with sympathy to the pathetic muse expressing her feelings in simple but inspired strains.

* * * * *

**LATER LINES PREFERRED BY
LONDON**

LATER LINES PREFERRED BY LONDON

COLUMBUS



BEHIND him lay the gray Azores,
Behind the Gates of Hercules;
Before him not the ghost of shores;
Before him only shoreless seas.
The good mate said: "Now must
we pray,
For lo! the very stars are gone,
Brave Adm'r'l speak; what shall I say?"
"Why, say: 'Sail on! sail on! and on!'"

"My men grow mutinous day by day;
My men grow ghastly, wan and weak."
The stout mate thought of home; a spray
Of salt wave washed his swarthy cheek.
"What shall I say, brave Adm'r'l, say,
If we sight naught but seas at dawn?"
"Why, you shall say at break of day:
'Sail on! sail on! sail on! and on!'"

They sailed and sailed, as winds might blow,
Until at last the blanched mate said:
"Why, now not even God would know
Should I and all my men fall dead.
These very winds forget their way,
For God from these dread seas is gone.
Now speak, brave Adm'r'l, speak and say——"
He said: "Sail on! sail on! and on!"

They sailed. They sailed. Then spake the mate:
 "This mad sea shows his teeth tonight.
 He curls his lip, he lies in wait,
 He lifts his teeth, as if to bite!
 Brave Adm'r'l, say but one good word:
 What shall we do when hope is gone?"
 The words leapt like a leaping sword:
 "Sail on! sail on! sail on! and on!"

Then pale and worn, he paced his deck,
 And peered through darkness. Ah, that night
 Of all dark nights! And then a speck—
 A light! A light! At last a light!
 It grew, a starlit flag unfurled!
 It grew to be Time's burst of dawn.
 He gained a world; he gave that world
 Its grandest lesson: "On! sail on!"

*The London "Athenaeum," years after the royal reception given my first books, pronounced this the best American poem. Let me say to my following it is far from that; even I have done better; too much like a chorus. "The passing of Tennyson" is better. "The Missouri" better still. Besides, "The Missouri" has a right to exist, as it stirred the waters from "The Shining Mountains" to the Gulf of Mexico, and taught the nation to no longer disdain "The Father of Waters."

But I accept the "Athenaeum's" generous praise with gratitude and call the attention of my American doubters to the fact that my European triumphs were not due, as they have insisted, entirely to new scenes, for the Gates of Hercules and the Azores are as old as the hills.

Meantime, let it be borne in mind that the Missouri, "the great, dark water," or "the mad, muddy water," as some translate it, reaches from the heart of Montana to within hail of the Cuban seas. The Mississippi, clear as crystal from its conflux with the somber and surging Missouri up even to its source—"Veritas Caput"—Itasca Lake, is in every sense quite another river and entirely of another character, in all respects. Give the Missouri his due and we have here in the heart of the Republic, and all our own, the noblest, if not the longest, river on the globe.

THE MISSOURI

Where ranged thy black-maned, woolly bulls
By millions, fat and unafraid;
Where gold, unclaimed in cradefuls,
Slept 'mid the grass roots, gorge, and glade;
Where peaks companioned with the stars,
And propped the blue with shining white,
With massive silver beams and bars,
With copper bastions, height on height—
There wast thou born, O lord of strength!
O yellow lion, leap and length
Of arm from out an Arctic chine
To far, fair Mexic seas are thine!

What colors? Copper, silver, gold
With sudden sweep and fury blent,
Enwound, unwound, inrolled, unrolled,
Mad molder of the continent!
What whirlpools and what choking cries
From out the concave swirl and sweep
As when some god cries out and dies
Ten fathoms down thy tawny deep!
Yet on, right on, no time for death,
No time to gasp a second breath!
You plow a pathway through the main
To Morro's castle, Cuba's plain.

Hoar sire of hot, sweet Cuban seas,
Gray father of the continent,
Fierce fashioner of destinies,
Of states thou hast upreared or rent,
Thou know'st no limit; seas turn back,
Bent, broken from the shaggy shore;
But thou, in thy resistless track,

Art lord and master evermore.
Missouri, surge and sing and sweep!
Missouri, master of the deep,
From snow-reared Rockies to the sea
Sweep on, sweep on eternally!

THE PASSING OF TENNYSON

My kingly kinsmen, kings of thought,
I hear your gathered symphonies,
Such nights as when the world is not,
And great stars chorus through my trees.
* * * * *

We knew it, as God's prophets knew;
We knew it, as mute red men know,
When Mars leapt searching heaven through
With flaming torch, that he must go.
Then Browning, he who knew the stars,
Stood forth and faced insatiate Mars.

Then up from Cambridge rose and turned
Sweet Lowell from his Druid trees—
Turned where the great star blazed and burned,
As if his own soul might appease.
Yet on and on through all the stars
Still searched and searched insatiate Mars.

Then stanch Walt Whitman saw and knew;
Forgetful of his "Leaves of Grass,"
He heard his "Drum Taps," and God drew
His great soul through the shining pass,
Made light, made bright by burnished stars;
Made scintillant from flaming Mars.

Then soft-voiced Whittier was heard
 To cease; was heard to sing no more,
 As you have heard some sweetest bird
 The more because its song is o'er.
 Yet brighter up the street of stars
 Still blazed and burned and beckoned Mars:
 * * * * * * *

And then the king came; king of thought,
 King David with his harp and crown. . . .
 How wisely well the gods had wrought
 That these had gone and sat them down
 To wait and welcome 'mid the stars
 All silent in the light of Mars.

All silent. . . .So, he lies in state. . . .
 Our redwoods drip and drip with rain. . . .
 Against our rock-locked Golden Gate
 We hear the great, sad, sobbing main.
 But silent all. . . .He passed the stars
 That year the whole world turned to Mars.

THE AMERICAN OCEAN

"Ten thousand miles of mobile sea—
 This sea of all seas blent as one
 Wide, unbound book of mystery,
 Of awe, of sibyl prophecy,
 Ere yet a ghost or misty ken
 Of God's far, first beginning when
 Vast darkness lay upon the deep:"
 * * * * * * *

"He looked to heaven, God; but she
 Saw only his face and the sea."
 * * * * * * *

"Aye, day is done, the dying sun
Sinks wounded unto death tonight;
A great, hurt swan, he sinks to rest,
His wings all crimson, blood his breast!
With wide, low wings, reached left and right,
He sings, and night and swan are one—
One huge, black swan of Helicon."

THE BIRDS AND BEES

I think the bees, our blessed bees,
Are better, wiser far than we,
The very wild birds in the trees
Are wiser far, it seems to me;
For love and light and sun and air
Are theirs, and not a bit of care.

What bird makes claim to all God's trees?
What bee makes claim to all God's flowers?
Behold their perfect harmonies,
Their common hoard, the common hours!
Say, why should man be less than these,
The happy birds, the hoarding bees?

CALIFORNIA'S CUP OF GOLD

The golden poppy is God's gold,
The gold that lifts, nor weighs us down
The gold that knows no miser's hold,
The gold that banks not in the town,
But singing, laughing, freely spills
Its hoard far up the happy hills;
Far up, far down, at every turn.—
What beggar has not gold to burn!

THE FORTUNATE ISLES

You sail and you seek for the Fortunate Isles,
The old Greek Isles of the yellow bird's song?
Then steer straight on through the watery miles,
Straight on, straight on, and you can't go wrong.
Nay not to the left, nay not to the right,
But on, straight on, and the Isles are in sight,
The old Greek Isles where yellow birds sing
And life lies girt with a golden ring.

These Fortunate Isles they are not so far,
They lie within reach of the lowliest door;
You can see them gleam by the twilight star;
You can hear them sing by the moon's white
shore—
Nay, never look back! Those leveled grave stones
They were landing steps; they were steps unto
thrones
Of glory for souls that have gone before,
And have set white feet on the fortunate shore.

And what are the names of the Fortunate Isles?
Why, Duty and Love and a large Content.
Lo! these are the Isles of the watery miles,
That God let down from the firmament.
Aye! Duty, and Love, and a true man's trust;
Your forehead to God though your feet in the dust.
Aye! Duty to man, and to God meanwhiles,
And these, O friend, are the Fortunate Isles.

DON'T STOP AT THE STATION DESPAIR

We must trust the Conductor, most surely;
Why, millions of millions before
Have made this same journey securely
And come to that ultimate shore.
And we, we will reach it in season;
And ah, what a welcome is there!
Reflect then, how out of all reason
To stop at the Station Despair.

Aye, midnights and many a potion
Of bitter black water have we
As we journey from ocean to ocean—
From sea unto ultimate sea—
To that deep sea of seas, and all silence
Of passion, concern and of care—
That vast sea of Eden-set Islands—
Don't stop at the Station Despair!

Go forward, whatever may follow,
Go forward, friend-led, or alone;
Ah me, to leap off in some hollow
Or fen, in the night and unknown—
Leap off like a thief; try to hide you
From angels, all waiting you there!
Go forward; whatever betide you,
Don't stop at the Station Despair!

TO RUSSIA

"Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth?"—Bible.

Who tamed your lawless Tartar blood?
What David bearded in her den
The Russian bear in ages when

You strode your black, unbridled stud,
A skin-clad savage of your steeps?
Why, one who now sits low and weeps,
Why, one who now wails out to you—
The Jew, the Jew, the homeless Jew.

Who girt the thews of your young prime
And bound your fierce divided force?
Why, who but Moses shaped your course
United down the grooves of time?
Your mighty millions all today
The hated, homeless, Jew obey.
Who taught all poetry to you?
The Jew, the Jew, your hated Jew.

Who taught you tender Bible tales
Of honey-lands, of milk and wine?
Of happy, peaceful Palestine?
Of Jordan's holy harvest vales?
Who gave the patient Christ? I say,
Who gave your Christian creed? Yea, yea,
Who gave your very God to you?
Your Jew! Your Jew! Your hated Jew!

TO ANDREW CARNEGIE

Hail, fat king Ned!
Hail, fighting Ted,
Grand William,
Grim Oom Paul!
But I'd rather twist
Carnegie's wrist,
That open hand in this,
Than shake hands with ye all.

I dislike personal and occasional lines so entirely that I think you can search these six volumes through in vain for another poem of this character. But there is only this one Carnegie; the best-hearted and the best-headed American citizen that ever wrote a book. Not long ago, when he was about to sail away, the Authors' Club of New York gave him a dinner, my publisher asked me for some lines. I did not know Mr. Carnegie then, personally, but as I admired him and his work as heartily as I despised his petty detractors, I sent the above brief summing up of Kings, with Carnegie at the head.

TRUE GREATNESS

How sad that all great things are sad,—
 That greatness knows not to be glad.
 The boundless, spouseless, fearful sea
 Pursues the moon incessantly;
 And Cæsar childless lives and dies.
 The thunder-torn Sequoia tree
 In solemn isolation cries
 Sad chorus with the homeless wind
 Above the clouds, above his kind,
 Above the bastioned peak, above
 All sign or sound or sense of love.
 How mateless, desolate and drear
 His lorn, long seven thousand year!
 My comrades, lovers, dare to be
 More truly great than Cæsar; he
 Who hewed three hundred towns apart,
 Yet never truly touched one heart.
 The tearful, lorn, complaining sea
 The very moon looks down upon,

Then changes,—as a saber drawn;
The great Sequoia lords as lone
As God upon that fabled throne.
No, no! True greatness, glory, fame,
Is his who claims not place nor name,
But loves, and lives content, complete,
With baby flowers at his feet.

ON THE FIRING LINE

For glory? For good? For fortune, or for fame?
Why, ho, for the front where the battle is on!
Leave the rear to the dolt, the lazy, the lame;
Go forward as ever the valiant have gone.
Whether city or field, whether mountain or mine,
Go forward, right on for the firing line!

Whether newsboy or plowboy or cowboy or clerk,
Fight forward; be ready, be steady, be first;
Be fairest, be bravest, be best at your work;
Exult and be glad; dare to hunger, to thirst,
As David, as Alfred—let dogs skulk and whine—
There is room but for men on the firing line.

Aye, the one place to fight and the one place to fall—
As fall we must all, in God's good time—
It is where the manliest man is the wall,
Where boys are as men in their pride and prime.
Where glory gleams brightest, where brightest eyes
shine—
Far out on the roaring red firing line.

—*Success Magazine.*

TO RACHAEL IN RUSSIA

"To bring them unto a good land and a large; unto a land flowing with milk and honey."

O thou, whose patient, peaceful blood
Paints Sharon's roses on thy cheek,
And down thy breasts played hide and seek,
Six thousand years a stainless flood,
Rise up and set thy sad face hence.
Rise up and come where Freedom waits
Within these white, wide ocean gates
To give thee God's inheritance;
To bind thy wounds in this despair;
To braid thy long, strong, loosened hair.

O Rachel, weeping where the flood
Of icy Volga grinds and flows
Against his banks of blood-red snows—
White banks made red with Rachel's blood—
Lift up thy head, be comforted;
For, as thou didst on manna feed,
When Russia roamed a bear in deed,
And on her own foul essence fed,
So shalt thou flourish as a tree
When Russ and Cossack shall not be.

Then come where yellow harvests swell;
Forsake that savage land of snows;
Forget the brutal Russian's blows;
And come where Kings of Conscience dwell.
Oh come, Rebecca to the well!
The voice of Rachel shall be sweet!
The Gleaner rest safe at the feet
Of one who loves her; and the spell
Of Peace that blesses Paradise
Shall kiss thy large and lonely eyes.

CUBA LIBRE

Comes a cry from Cuban water—
From the warm, dusk Antilles—
From the lost Atlanta's daughter,
Drowned in blood as drowned in seas;
Comes a cry of purpled anguish—
See her struggles, hear her cries!
Shall she live, or shall she languish?
Shall she sink, or shall she rise?

She shall rise, by all that's holy!
She shall live and she shall last;
Rise as we, when crushed and lowly,
From the blackness of the past.
Bid her strike! Lo, it is written
Blood for blood and life for life.
Bid her smite, as she is smitten;
Behold, our stars were born of strife!

Once we flashed her lights of freedom,
Lights that dazzled her dark eyes
Till she could but yearning heed them,
Reach her hands and try to rise.
Then they stabbed her, choked her, drowned her,
Till we scarce could hear a note.
Ah! these rusting chains that bound her!
Oh! these robbers at her throat!

And the kind who forged these fetters?
Ask five hundred years for news.
Stake and thumbscrew for their betters?
Inquisitions! Banished Jews!
Chains and slavery! What reminder
Of one red man in that land?

Why, these very chains that bind her
Bound Columbus, foot and hand!

She shall rise as rose Columbus,
From his chains, from shame and wrong—
Rise as Morning, matchless, wondrous—
Rise as some rich morning song—
Rise a ringing song and story,
Valor, Love personified. . . .
Stars and stripes, espouse her glory,
Love and Liberty allied.

Written for and read by the Baroness de Bazus in all
our great cities before the Spanish war.



LESSONS FOR MY LOVERS

LESSONS FOR MY LOVERS

I but sing for the love of song and the few
Who loved me first and shall love me last;
And the storm shall pass as the storms have passed,
For never were clouds but the sun came through.



LET it be distinctly understood that this volume, the first of the half dozen to embrace such poems as I wish to preserve, is not addressed to the public but to personal friends and such following as really and truly love the beautiful and believe in American Letters. I think the time is at hand to take ourselves and our work seriously.

I therefore insert here parts of the preface from a former edition, destroyed in the recent San Francisco calamity. I also add bits of addresses to students, here and there, letters, lectures and so on, anything that might give light or any sort of help in the right direction. For it has been out of the question to answer or even open all the letters along these lines, however honest and earnest.

* * * * *

The purpose here, outside of revising entirely and gathering into this work such poems as are to be preserved, is to advise with coming poets, blaze some trees along the trail; a note of warning here, a camp-fire there, the experience of a pioneer; so that those who follow may not falter or go astray in the wilderness that darkens along the foothills of Olympus. George Sand said all Americans are poets. Certainly all American writers are poets, or, as a rule, begin as such. True, many of our great lawyers began by writing poetry, like

Blackstone. Perhaps our greatest poets at heart never took the world into confidence at all in the maturity of power, but kept a cold and severe visage for all men, and went to their graves as practical merchants, lawyers, doctors, and so on, with only one little corner of the heart for flowers and a bird, all their own. And what pleasure to write for such readers!

There are those who would or could be poets, and yet will not. Let me address myself to these, for they have foolish notions as to what a poet is, and what it costs to be a poet, or rather what it costs to not be a poet.

A great land without a great literature, were such a thing possible, must be to the end worse than spouseless. Jerusalem was ever but a small place. You can cover her on the map of the world with a pin's head, yet is she more than all the Babylons that have been. She loved, and devoutly loved, the sublime and the beautiful. From this love was born her poets. The cedars of Lebanon, the lilies of the valley, these were the first letters of their alphabet. And as there cannot be a great land on the page of history without first a great literature, so there cannot be a great literature without first a deep, broad, devout and loving religion.

The great poet of this great land of ours, these west-most mountains and the ultimate sea bank, so like the olive-set Syrian hills, will come when we, too, have learned to love, and religiously love, the sublime and beautiful.

Why not permit the coming poet to take up his work in the morning of life where it is now laid down in the twilight of one who is going away?

To this end let us divest the poets of all that

mystery and special evil and special good with which ignorance and superstition have garmented them. They were ever plain men. They were ever human; and the more human the broader, richer, deeper their divine voices of the land.

Is there such a thing as genius, inspiration? I think there is no such thing. Rather let us call it a devout and all-pervading love for the sublime, the beautiful and good, the never-questioning conviction that there is nothing in this world that is not beautiful or trying to be beautiful; that there is no man with the breath of God in his nostrils who is not good or trying in his poor, blind way as best he may to be good. "And He looked upon all He had made and behold it was very good."

Genius is love that is born of this truth, leading ever by plain and simple ways, and true toil and care, as all nature toils and cares, as God toils and cares; that is all. I write this down for those who may come after. We will have higher results from the plain sweet truth.

And when your great poet comes, as he surely will and soon, do not mock because he goes apart from folly to meditate. Ever from the first the prophets went up into the mountains to pray. A poet need not be "eccentric" to turn apart from getting and getting. In truth he would be no real poet if he did not. A good poet need not be a bad man. He may not be a better man than yourself, but he is not necessarily worse for being a poet. I repeat, he is merely a plain, sincere human being in love with the beautiful world "and all that is His."

Byron, in a letter to Moore, says, "The night to me has been everything." In another he says, "I read Spencer half the time, as I write Childe

Harold, in order to keep the measure and melody in my brain." Burns says, "I keep as many as a half dozen poems maturing in my mind at the same time, 'and write them down when I find time." These and like little side lights from other great poets have done me so much good that I have decided to tell by way of fragments as we go forward so much of my own methods of work as may possibly light the path of some discouraged Keats of coming days. For the greater the poet the greater his sensibility, and the greater the sensibility the greater his sufferings in the somber foothill forests of Parnassus..

Also for the help and good of the poets who may take up my work where I lay it down, divested of all folly and falsehood with which it has been so cruelly garmented from the first, I have written, or shall write the story, source, purpose of my poems, so far as may be of use.

The first thing of mine in print was the valedictory class poem, Columbia College, now the State University, Eugene, Oregon, 1859. Oregon, settled by missionaries, was a great place for schools from the first. At this date, Columbia College, the germ of the University, had many students from California, and was famous as an educational center. Divest the mind at once of the idea that the schools of Oregon were inferior. I have never since found such determined students and omnivorous readers. We had all the books and none of the follies of great centers.

I had been writing, or trying to write, since a lad. My two brothers and my sister were at my side, our home with out parents, and we lived entirely to ourselves, and really often made ourselves

ill from too much study. We were all school teachers when not at college. In 1861 my elder brother and I were admitted to practice law, under George H. Williams, afterwards Attorney-General under President Grant. Brother went at once to the war, I to the gold mines.

* * * * *

Right into the heart of the then unknown and unnamed Idaho (*Idah-ho*) and Montana; gold dust was as wheat in harvest time. I, and another, born to the saddle, formed an express line and carried letters in from the Oregon river and gold dust out, gold dust by the horse load after horse load, till we earned all the gold we wanted. Such rides! and each alone. Indians holding the plunging horses ready for us at relays. I had lived with and knew, trusted the red men and was never betrayed. Those matchless night rides under the stars, dashing into the Orient doors of dawn before me as the sun burst through the shining mountain pass—this brought my love of song to the surface.

I wrote much as I traveled, soon after, but never kept my verses, once published. I thought, and still hold that under right conditions and among a right people—and these mighty American people are perhaps more nearly right than any other that have yet been—anything in literature that is worth preserving will preserve itself. As none of my verses with this following exception have come down on the river of Time it is safe to say nothing of all I wrote could serve any purpose except to feed foolish curiosity. I give the following place, written years after the college valedictory, not only because it is right in spirit but because it shows how old, how very old I was as a boy, and sad at heart

over the cruelties of man to man. This was my first poem printed, after the valedictory, about 1866, and has been drifting around ever since:

IS IT WORTH WHILE?

Is it worth while that we jostle a brother
 Bearing his load on the rough road of life?
 Is it worth while that we jeer at each other
 In blackness of heart?—that we war to the knife?
 God pity us all in our pitiful strife.

God pity us all as we jostle each other;
 God pardon us all for the triumphs we feel
 When a fellow goes down; poor heart-broken brother,
 Pierced to the heart; words are keener than steel,
 And mightier far for woe or for weal.

Were it not well in this brief little journey
 On over the isthmus down into the tide,
 We give him a fish instead of a serpent,
 Ere folding the hands to be and abide
 For ever and aye in dust at his side.

Look at the roses saluting each other;
 Look at the herds all at peace on the plain—
 Man, and man only, makes war on his brother,
 And dotes in his heart on his peril and pain—
 Shamed by the brutes that go down on the plain.

* * * * *

Why should you envy a moment of pleasure
 Some poor fellow-mortal has wrung from it all?
 Oh! could you look into his life's broken measure—
 Look at the dregs—at the wormwood and gall—
 Look at his heart hung with crape like a pall—

Look at the skeletons, hideous, unholy,
 Look at his cares in their merciless sway,
 I know you would go and say tenderly, lowly,
 Brother—my brother, for aye and a day,
 Lo! Lethe is washing the blackness away.

* * * * *

Had I melted into my surroundings, instead of reading and writing continually, life had not been so dismal; but I lived among the stars, an abstemious ghost. Then "Specimens," a thin book of verse, and some laughed, and political and personal foes all up and down the land derided. This made me more determined, and the next year "Joaquin *et al.*," a book of 124 pages, resulted. Bret Harte, of the *Overland*, behaved bravely; but, as a rule: "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?"

I was so unpopular that when I asked a place on the Supreme Bench at the convention, I was derisively told: "Better stick to poetry." Three months later, September 1, 1870, I was kneeling at the grave of Burns. I really expected to die there in the land of my fathers; I was so broken and ill.

May I proudly admit that I had sought a place on the Supreme Bench in order that I might the more closely "stick to poetry"? I have a serious purpose in saying this. Was Lowell a bad diplomatist because he was a good poet? Is Gladstone less great because of his three hundred books and pamphlets? The truth is, there never was, never will be, a great general, judge, lawyer, anything, without being at heart, at least, a great poet. Then let not our conventions, presidents, governors, despise the young poet. We have plenty of lawyers, judges, silent great men of all sorts; yet the land, the vast West, is songless. Had my laudable ambition not been despised, how much better I might have sang; who shall say?

Let me quote a few lines from the last pages of my little book, published before setting out. They will show, not much poetry, perhaps, but a brave

resignation, a belief in immortality, a hope to be read in Europe, and a singularly early desire to not be formally buried, but to pass in clouds and ashes. The little book, "*Joaquin et al.*", from which the following lines were taken, was first published in Portland, Oregon, in 1868:

ULTIME

* * * * *

Had I been content to live on the leafy borders of the
scene
Communing with the neglected dwellers of the fern-grown
glen,
And glorious storm-stained peaks, with cloud-knit sheen,
And sullen iron brows, and belts of boundless green,
A peaceful, flowery path, content, I might have trod,
And carolled melodies that perchance might have been
Read with love and a sweet delight. But I kiss the rod.
I have done as best I knew. The rest is with my God.

Come forward here to me, ye who have a fear of death,
Come down, far down, even to the dark waves' rim,
And take my hand, and feel my calm, low breath;
How peaceful all! How still and sweet! The sight is
dim,
And dreamy as a distant sea. And melodies do swim
Around us here as a far-off vesper's holy hymn.
This is death. With folded hands I wait and welcome
him;
And yet a few, some few, were kind, I would live and so
be known,
That their sweet words might be as bread on waters strown.

I go, I know not where, but know I shall not die,
And know I will be gainer going to that somewhere;
For in that hereafter, afar beyond the bended sky,
Bread and butter will not figure in the bill of fare,
Nor will the soul be judged by what the flesh may
wear.
But with all my time my own, once in the dapple skies,

LESSONS FOR MY LOVERS

I will collect my beautifuls now floating in the air
And arrange them, a jewel set, that in a show-case lies
And when you come will show you them in some sweet
surprise.

It was my boy-ambition to be read beyond the brine,
But this you know was when life looked fair and tall.
Erewhile this occidental rim was my dream's confine,
And now at last I make no claim to be read at all,
But write with this sweet hope, and even that is small,
That when the last pick-ax lies rusting in the ravine,
And its green bent hill-sides echo the shepherd's call,
Some curious wight will thumb this through, saying, "Well,
I ween
He was not a poet, but yet, and yet, he might have been."
* * * * *

But to conclude. Do not stick me down in the cold wet
mud,
As if I wished to hide, or was ashamed of what I had
done,
Or my friends believed me born of slime, with torpid blood.
No, when this the first short quarter of my life is run,
Let me ascend in clouds of smoke up to the sun.
And as for these lines, they are a rough, wild-wood bouquet,
Plucked in my mountains in the dusk of life, as one
Without taste or time to select, or put in good array,
Grasps rose, leaf, briar, on the brink, and hastes away.

Canyon City, Oregon, 1867.

* * * * *

Fault may be found, as with Hawthorne when
he gathered up his Tales, that all I have written is
not here. Let me answer with him that all I wish
to answer for is here. The author must be the sole
judge as to what belongs to the public and what to
the flames. Much that I have written has been on
trial for many years. The honest, wise old world
of today is a fairly safe jury. While it is true the
poet must lead rather than be led, yet must he lead

pleasantly, patiently, or he may not lead at all. So that which the world let drop out of sight as the years surged by I have, as a rule, not cared to introduce a second time.

For example take the lines written on the dead millionaire of New York. There were perhaps a dozen verses at first, but the world found use for and kept before it only the two following:

The gold that with the sunlight lies
 In bursting heaps at dawn,
 The silver spilling from the skies
 At night to walk upon,
 The diamonds gleaming in the dew
 He never saw, he never knew.

He got some gold, dug from the mud,
 Some silver, crushed from stones;
 But the gold was red with dead men's blood,
 The silver black with groans;
 And when he died he moaned aloud
 "They'll make no pocket in my shroud."

The antithesis of this ugly truth and poetry, the lines to Peter Cooper's memory, also shared the same fate. The world did not want all I had to say of this gentle old man and kept only the three little verses:

Honor and glory forever more
 To this good man gone to rest;
 Peace on the dim Plutonian shore;
 Rest in the land of the blest.

I reckon him greater than any man
 That ever drew sword in war;
 Nobler, better than king or khan,
 Better, wiser by far.

Aye, wisest he in this whole wide land,
Of hoarding till bent and gray;
For all you can hold in your cold, dead hand
Is what you have given away.

* * * * *

May I, an old teacher, in conclusion, lay down a lesson or two for the young in letters? After the grave of Burns, then a month at Byron's tomb, then Schiller, Goethe; before battle fields. Heed this. The poet must be loyal, loyal not only to his God and his country, but loyal, loving, to the great masters who have nourished him.

This devotion to the masters led me to first set foot in London near White Chapel where Bayard Taylor had lived; although I went at once to the Abbey. Then I lived at Camberwell, because Browning was born there; then at Hemmingford Road, because Tom Hood died there.

A thin little book now, called "Pacific Poems." I could not find a publisher. One hundred were printed, bearing the name of my printer as publisher. What fortune! With the press notices in hand, I now went boldly to the most aristocratic publisher in London.

There never was a poet and there never will be a poet who disputes God, or so degrades himself as to doubt His eternal existence.

One word as to the choice of theme. First, let it be new. The world has no use for two Homers, or even a second Shakespeare, were he possible.

And now think it not intrusion if one no longer young should ask the coming poet to not waste his forces in discovering this truth: The sweetest flowers grow closest to the ground. We are all too ready to choose some lurid battle theme or exalted

subject. Exalt your theme rather than ask your theme to exalt you. Braver and better to celebrate the lowly and forgiving grasses under foot than the stately cedars and sequoias overhead. They can speak for themselves. It has been scornfully said that all my subjects are of the low or savage. It might have been as truly said that some of my heroes and heroines, as Reil and Sophia Petrowska, died on the scaffold. How unfortunate that man who never knew misfortune! There never has yet been a great poem written of a rich man or gross. And I glory in the fact that I never, as a sole purpose, celebrated war or warriors. Thrilling as are war themes, you will not find one, purposely, in all my books. If you would have the heart of the world with you, put heart in your work, taking care that you do not try to pass brass for gold. They are much alike to look upon, but only the ignorant can be deceived. And what is poetry without heart! In truth, were I asked to define poetry, I would answer in a single word, *Heart*. Or, to elaborate a little bit, true poetry is concrete truth: truth set to music.

* * * * *

If you were not born with an appreciation, a worship of the beautiful, then go and learn it as you learn mathematics, language, philosophy; study it every day—when you walk, when you ride, when you rest by the roadside. The flight of a bird gracefully drooping, curving, gliding through the air; the shape and tint of a single autumn leaf; the movement and the voice of the wind in the forest; a deep, rounded, curled moon in the heavens; the still, far stars; the movement of a proud, pure

woman as she walks; the graceful lift of her foot, the dimpled hand, the delicious, rounded wrist, the proud development, the lifted face, the lovely lifted face as it looks into space for God. Oh! if you love not these, I pity you; indeed I do.

If you were to ask me where I thought the greatest happiness was to be found—I mean pure, sweet and inexpressible delight—I should say: in the love of the beautiful.

If you will take the pains to consider this a moment—and you ought to give it years of consideration—you will find that all things are beautiful; the whole earth, all things on the earth or in the sea; everything is struggling, all the time, for some expression of beauty. The law of the beautiful is as general and absolute as the law of gravitation. You may drop the vilest bit of dirt on the roadside as you pass by. You come along next year and you will find it is giving some expression of beauty in little flowers, tall, strange weeds, or moss that lifts a thousand perfect spangles from out its velvet carpet.

Yet you cannot come to love the beautiful in a day. The worship of Nature is sweet. But Nature is a jealous God. You shall not rush into her temples with soiled hands and benumbed soul, and rest and be glad. She will cast you out if you attempt it. You must take your shoes off as you enter the Mosque at Constantinople, and bow your head and be silent. How much more glorious are the temples of Nature? Democratic as she is, she must have at least something of the respect you pay to the temples of man. You must pass into her temple by degrees. Why, it is a half life's

journey to her heart from the outer door, where you must leave your shoes as you enter.

* * * * *

A true seer will see that which is before him, and about him, in and of his own land and life. "The eyes of the fool are in the ends of the earth." The real and reasonable should best inspire us. I do not care to explore impossible hells with either dolorous Dante or majestic Milton. I do not believe there are any such places, save as we make them in our own minds. Indeed, life would be fearful could I be made to believe that the heart of this beautiful globe is filled with human beings writhing in eternal torments under my feet. Such books can do no good; and the only excuse for any book is the pleasure it can give and the good it can do.

And now, let me say finally, at the risk of repetition, my followers, friends and lovers, do not consent to celebrate strife, or the so-called heroes of battle. I command you, go hungry first, starve to death first!

With the millions on millions of brave and true deeds of beautiful women, with the flowers underfoot and the glory of God overhead and all about you, why turn to some soldier with sword and battles for inspiration? You, if a real poet will never attempt the noisy task, never!

What is the matter with American Letters? Vitriol throwers! The talented young men of the south, duelists, "heroes" of the Mexican war, sought trouble, and they got it. The equally gifted scribes of the north hit back, and the politicians did the rest.

This is a pastoral land, a land of free and honest toil, a land of cane and corn and milk and honey.

But "in the sweat of thy face" is the law of God and man. Don't try to get something for nothing if you aspire to being a poet. If you hope to make sweet sugar from your cane you must plant and plow and plant. There was more poetry in the soul of a Cincinnatus or a Washington than in all the Cæsars or Napoleons. There is more poetry in a single emerald cornfield than ever was heard of on all the battlefields of earth. But to grow even so much as one great hill of corn that may be a credit to the Nation you must plow it and hoe it and thin it out; and above all beware of the suckers!

No, if you must kill, or even contend, go and enlist, go to Congress, go marry some brawny-armed cook and eloquent, but don't try to write poetry. For as there is a God in Israel, you must not only love poetry but live poetry before you can write poetry.

And above all do not expect pity or patronage. The Chinese say Happy the great poet who makes even one true friend in a full lifetime. The prophets have been stoned from the first and they will be stoned for centuries to come. The one truest poet on all the pages of history? They cried, "Away with him! Crucify him!" And they crucified him.

The poet ever was and ever will be the poorest of all men. Yet he is at the same time the richest. For to him every tree, every brook, every bird is a miracle. He sees more in a day, has more delight in a single year, than most men in a lifetime. And yet must he suffer more than others, a thousand times more. In truth, all sensitive natures must suffer keenly, as they enjoy keenly. Joy and sorrow are so nearly akin in the poet that you may whisper through the wall that divides them and be heard.

LESSONS FOR MY LOVERS

Joy bursts into tears and tears sometimes find relief in hysterical laughter.

True poetry is concrete truth. Every poem that survives the season must justify its right to live by the truth it contains as well as the beauty it unfolds.

* * * * *

Let me again invoke you, be loyal to your craft, not only to your craft, but to your fellow scribes. To let envy lure you to leer at even the humblest of them is to admit yourself beaten; to admit yourself to be one of the thousand failures betraying the one success. Braver it were to knife in the back a holy man at prayer. I plead for something more than the individual poet. I plead for the entire Republic. To not have a glorious literature of our own is to be another Nineveh, Babylon, Turkey. Nothing ever has paid, nothing ever will pay a nation like poetry. How many millions have we paid, are still paying, bleak and rocky little Scotland to behold the land of Burns? Byron led the world to scatter its gold through the ruins of Italy, where he had mused and sang, and Italy was rebuilt. Greece survived a thousand years on the melodies of her mighty dead.

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Finally, use the briefest little bits of baby Saxon words at hand. The world is waiting for ideas, not for words. Remember Shakespeare's scorn of "words, words, words." Remember always that it was the short Roman sword that went to the heart and conquered the world, not the long tasseled and bannered lance of the barbarian. The Sermon on

the Mount, the noblest poem ever uttered, has only 303 different words.

* * * * *

Will we ever have an American literature? Yes, when we leave sound and words to the winds. American science has swept time and space aside. American science dashes along at fifty, sixty miles an hour; but American literature still lumbers along in the old-fashioned English stage-coach at ten miles an hour; and sometimes with a red-coated outrider blowing a horn. We must leave all this behind us. We have not time for words. A man who uses a great big sounding word when a short one will do is to that extent a robber of time. A jewel that depends greatly on its setting is not a great jewel. When the Messiah of American literature comes he will come singing, so far as may be, in words of one syllable.



A LAST INTERVIEW WITH MOTHER

A LAST INTERVIEW WITH MOTHER

(ISABEL DARLING IN SUNSET MAGAZINE.)



IN her willow chair on the rose-sheltered porch, when the afternoon sun shone warm on the hillside, sat Margaret Miller, "beautiful Margaret," as she was called in her youth, handsome, lovable Margaret Miller, as she remained, with her abundant brown hair, kindly eyes and cheery ways.

"I don't know why I live so long," she said, laughingly, after passing, by many a Christmas, the allotment of three-score and ten; "I don't know why I live so long; I guess the Lord has clean forgot me. But I don't worry. I don't worry any more about anything. It isn't worth while." And then she sang, in her still sweet and scarcely tremulous voice, the beginning of an old-fashioned song:

I ask not for beauty, I sigh not for wealth,
But grant me, kind Providence, virtue and health;
Then richer than kings and far happier than they,
I'll not listen to naught that deceivers can say.

"Yes, I love fun, always did," she went on. "My husband was a Quaker, and sometimes he would draw himself up very straight, without saying anything, and I knew he didn't quite like it; then John D., that was my oldest child, would say: 'Let mother laugh; it is better than paying doctor's bills.'"

"I was born in Winchester. I'm not going to tell you how old I am, but it was in 1816, and you can reckon for yourself. Yes, Winchester, Ohio,

and when I was a year old we crossed over the line into Liberty, Union County, Indiana.

"We lived in a two-storied wooden house, painted red, with a chimney in the middle and fireplaces all around, and the floors were covered with homespun woolen carpets. Father's place was on Silver Creek, and after grandfather died and he bought out the other heirs—he was one of fifteen children—he had a saw-mill, a flour-mill, a tannery and an oil-mill, where they made flaxseed oil. He was considered rich before he divided the property among his children.

"My mother's name was Elizabeth Fall, and her people came from Georgia to Wheeling, Ohio. Grandfather Fall had two wives and twenty-four children; twelve apiece. Mother was beautiful; had dark, reddish brown hair and a clear, very white skin. She was the most industrious woman I ever saw, did her own spinning, knitting and weaving. When I went to Oregon I had several of our home-made coverlets, and I thought they were nice.

"We were all hearty as could be. We ate anything that tasted good, and never heard any talk about things being wholesome or unwholesome. One day, not long ago, Joaquin tried to make me think that something I wanted wasn't good for me, and I told him I always had eaten it, and that was why I died so young. Of course, he hadn't anything more to say.

"My husband, as I told you, was a Quaker. His sister was left a widow, and he came to live with her, and so taught school in our neighborhood and passed our house every night and morning, and stopped to speak. He told me afterwards he used

to try to catch me unawares, but I was always fixed up. Mother was sick, then, and we had a large house to take care of, but I always managed to get my work out of the way early.

"He taught that term and another one, and when we began to talk about getting married, mother cried about it at first, then said yes, if I wouldn't leave her as long as she lived. She died about a month after the wedding, but we stayed till father married again.

"O, they read Mr. Miller out of meeting for marrying me; he felt sorry, but we moved away, and then it didn't matter so much. Father gave forty dollars for my wedding dress, a brown satin with small, black figures. I already had six silk dresses, but he wanted me to have a new one, and I chose dark because mother was so sick I didn't feel like wearing gay clothes. My changeable silk I bought by spinning and weaving enough linsey to pay for it.

"Joaquin came naturally enough by his roving disposition, for his father kept running somewhere every year or two. I would dig up the yard and plant things everywhere we went, but it didn't do much good. Then he took it into his head to go to Oregon, but heard about the Whitman massacre and waited. We stopped for a while near Rochester, not far from the Tippecanoe River, in Indiana.

"It was three years before we finally started for Oregon, and by that time there were three little boys in the family, James, John D. and Cincinnati H. (Joaquin), besides Ella. George, my baby, was an Oregonian.

"They weren't like most children. Joaquin always kept to himself; he never played, never had

playthings, never wanted them; none of my children did. They were always doing something, or they wanted books. Those little boys used to take the team and a load of corn to Logansport, sell it and put up at the hotel and come back the next day, and they were always reading while they were there. Once, when Jimmy and Joaquin went, it sleeted on the way home, and the boys crawled under the sacks and let the horses go without driving. They went all right, but Jimmy was so nearly frozen that he couldn't stand. Joaquin must have been seven or eight years old then. Years after, when Joaquin's name began to be in the papers, a man in Logansport wrote to us, asking if he was one of those little boys that used to drive into town with corn to sell, and said that he would give anything for a good talk with their father and mother.

"We set out for Oregon with two big wagons, and a covered buggy for ourselves and clothes and provisions. The country was full of Indians, then, attacking the trains and shooting the people, if they couldn't get the cattle and provisions without. They seemed to be always before or behind, but they never meddled with us. My husband didn't like guns around, and they could have murdered us all, if they had tried. One evening, when he was praying, they came up with a whirl and a rush, but when they saw him with both arms raised and his eyes looking at nothing near him they said, 'He is talking with the Great Spirit,' and went away. One day a big fellow rode into camp and talked a while, and he took a great fancy to Ella, said she was 'heap nice,' and took her for a ride. He brought her back all right, but it scares me now to think of it.

"We were six months in crossing, and the cattle

died and the people died, and the sick men lay in the wagons, and the well women drove the oxen; and the wagons were left by the trail because there were no cattle to haul them, and we began to throw away what we could do without. I tore out the family record, to keep, and left my big Bible somewhere on the desert. It was an awful time, and I was so tired.

"Well, we managed to get through to Oregon with one team and a wagon and a few cows. They were all poor, for most of them had been yoked in with the oxen to help haul the load. We took up one claim and bought another and went to work setting out orchard and vineyard. We had the earliest and best fruit in the country, and our stock did well. I made butter and cheese for market and kept a sort of tavern, besides taking care of my children, and I hadn't any servants, either, only a little Indian boy that my husband brought home one day after Ella died."

She leaned her head against the willow rocker, this still mourning mother, and sat silent, looking out across the peaceful bay with its anchored ships, but aroused herself at a question.

"The farm? Oh, we kept it thirty-five years, and twice the house burned down, but we had a pretty cottage in Eugene besides, so after a while I took the children and went there to live in the winter, to send them to school, and Mr. Miller went back and forth as he liked. There were the cattle and horses and hired men to look after.

"Perhaps it was on account of moving about so much, but Joaquin didn't like school very well; wanted to take his books and study in his own way, so when he was thirteen he left with another boy,

and we were dreadfully worried about him till we found out where he was. Yes, he came back and went to college a little while, not very long. He kept a journal coming across the plains; he was 10 years old then, but he began to write before that. He had a little sweetheart, and she died and he wrote a poem about her. No, I haven't any copy of it. I had two scrap-books full of his things and the newspaper notices, but they all went when the house burned. I wish I had his journal to show you, but when I think of that time I wonder we saved anything, even our own lives. It was more than a great many did.

"Back in Indiana, visitors would ask him to speak Mother Goose pieces when he was so little he bumped his head against the table in running to hide afterwards. Yes, he was a little shy, but I think he liked it. He seemed to always believe he was to be famous. One day, before we came to Oregon, we were at dinner and he spoke out, all of a sudden: 'Mother, some time you will have Judge Miller at table with you.'

"Well, he did study law, and he was a Judge, for a while, but I guess he liked poetry better. His hair? It wasn't like it is now, had a sort of blue cast, so that people noticed it. I remember once he stopped at Canon City, on his way back from somewhere, and the waiter called out, 'Eggs for seven! Here comes that blue-headed lawyer again!'

"He was with Ike Mossman in the pony express business for a year, and it was dangerous business in those days, through the mountains, where there were deep snows and wild animals and robbers, but not many roads.

* * * * *

"You see, there were eight of us in father's family, four boys and four girls, and I was the youngest, and all grew up and had families of our own. My father's name was John Daniel Witt, and we all thought so much of him that every one of us named a boy for him, and so, to tell them apart, we would say John B., or John F., or John something else. Mine was John Daniel, and we called him John D. He was a noble boy. After he went away he used to write such long letters home the neighbors would wonder what he found to write so much about. Yes, he always found enough to say to his mother. He never came back. He enlisted in the Union army, and then, after a while, I didn't get any more letters."

The fog came in at the Golden Gate, rolled along the bay, crept up the hills and drifted silently into sheltering nooks and canons. She sat, watching it as it came, then added softly: "One day his father was killed, thrown out of the wagon by those spirited horses, and somehow, with it all, I didn't care for anything any more, for a long time; people said I was getting careless."

The fog parted and the light shone out gloriously golden on her hair, her face and her quiet hands. What need was there of asking more? The strong, honest, loving heart had expressed itself in this fragmentary story of her life. She had lived to work and to be happy in her loves and friendships, and with the going of those three dear ones the purpose of her life had wavered. The farm and stock were let, then sold, and finally, twenty years ago, she came to stay with her poet son, whose home, then, was merely a small cottage or two on a bare, rocky hillside. His early dream of Utopian

life was not a prophecy, so far as might concern his own, and she did not care for help, preferring, until within a few years, to be alone and independent, even after the loving anxiety of friends protested.

Many who knew her, and many others who did not, made light of the two-mile climb to "The Heights," and went away feeling well repaid. A missionary to the Shawnee Indians, a man in his eighty-ninth year, walked up to clasp her hand, a venerable bishop followed the path to the hilltop, and to this day it is called "the bishop's walk"; children came and sang for her, famous educators, travelers, scientists and authors of all kinds and degrees loved to sit beside her and talk or listen. She was an example to us all in her cheerful acceptance of life as it presented itself to her, with no extravagant mourning for the past or apparent dread of the future.



LINES THAT PAPA LIKED



LINES THAT PAPA LIKED

GOOD BUDDAH SAID, "BE CLEAN, BE CLEAN"

A free translation from the Chinese.



BE clean, be clean!" Guatama cried,
Come, know the strength of being
clean;

Come, lie no more, ye who have lied,
Come, lust no more, no more be
mean;

Be false no more, be foul no more,
For I shall judge ye to the core."

They came, the silken Mandarin,
The soldier with his blood-wet name,
The poet with his lust of fame,
The priest in sandals soaked with sin,
The lawyer with his quibs and lies,
The merchant with queer merchandise.

And each so proud, proud and polite!
So proud and clean! clean out of sight!
Their very finger nails so clean
They shone like sea shells, pink and green—
A sort of ultra-submarine—
Whatever ultra-sub may mean.

And, too, there came a barefoot boy,
Who left his long-horned purple cow
Amid red poppies at the plow—
Came whistling low with quiet joy,
To stand aloof with modest mien
And see the strength of being clean.

LINES THAT PAPA LIKED

Guatama waved his wand, and lo,
On each such load of dirt was laid
He bowed and sank down, sore afraid.
Some sank so low, some trembled so,
Some sank in such sad, piteous plight
Their red-topt heads sank out of sight.

The Mandarin with silk-tipt tail
Showed scarce a shining finger nail.
The white-robed lawyer, lies and brief,
Lay hid in dirt past all belief.
The red-robed merchant could not rise
One jot from out his load of lies.

And all lay helpless, all save one,
That simple-hearted farmer's son,
With soiled bare feet and sweat-moiled face,
Who stood soft whistling in his place—
Stood wondering, yet safe, serene,
In all the strength of being clean.

But sudden tears came to his eyes,
A flood of tender, piteous tears,
For those poor slaves, so bound by lies,
And writhing in their filth and fears.
He leaned in pity o'er, when lo,
His clean tears washed all clean as snow!

What is the matter with China, the mightiest and in some ways, such as reverence for parents and respect for old age, the most civilized power that ever had place on the pages of history? Why, China never adored beauty. China set up and keeps in her temples a monstrous, hideous Joss, and until the day that her hideous Joss is thrown down will she, too, be deservedly hideous in the eyes of the world.

The Greeks loved, admired, glorified beauty, and so they became the most beautiful of all the earth.

LINES THAT PAPA LIKED

Then that divinely beautiful young Jew, Jesus Christ, arose and taught us gentleness and the love of the beautiful in nature. The lilies of the field, the roses of Sharon, the cedars of Lebanon, these were His alphabet. He companioned with beautiful woman, gentle, tearful, tender woman, and gave her place as the peer of man, and so man, for the first time in all the troublous story of the world, came to really love and adore the beauty of woman and even to worship her under the guise of the divine Madonna, so that today all the Christian world worships beauty as all nature worships, glorifies and invokes beauty, the god of her idolatry.

When the missionary persuades the Chinese to hurl down and trample under foot their hideous idols and enshrine the beautiful Madonna, give woman her high place, then will China be herself beautiful, and not before.

PLEASANT TO THE SIGHT

"And God planted a garden eastward in Eden wherein He caused to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food."

Behold the tree, the lordly tree,
That fronts the four winds of the storm
A fearless and defiant form
That mocks wild winter merrily!
Behold the beauteous, budding tree
With censors swinging in the air,
With arms in attitude of prayer,
With myriad leaves, and every leaf
A miracle of color, mold,
More gorgeous than a house of gold!
Each leaf a poem of God's plan,
Each leaf as from His book of old
To build, to bastion man's belief:
Man's love of God, man's love of man.

Aye, love His trees, leaf, trunk, or root,
The comely, stately, upright grace
That greets God's rain with lifted face;

LINES THAT PAPA LIKED

The great, white, beauteous, highborn rain
That rides as white sails ride the main,
That wraps alike leaf, trunk or shoot,
 When sudden thunder lights his torch
 And strides high Heaven's ample porch.
Aye, love God's tree, leaf, branch and root.
 For God set first the pleasant tree;
 The "good for food" came tardily.
The poor, blind hog knows but the fruit,
And wallows in his fat and dies,
A hog, up to his very eyes.

A HARD ROW FOR STUMPS

You ask for manliest, martial deeds?
 Go back to Ohio's natal morn—
 Go back to Kentucky's fields of corn;
Just weeds and stumps and stumps and weeds!
Just red men blazing from stump and tree
 Where buckskin'd prophets 'midst strife and stress
 Came crying, came dying in the wilderness,
That hard, first, cruel half-century!

What psalms they sang! what prayers they said,
 Cabin or camp, as the wheels rolled west;
 Silently leaving their bravest, best—
Paving a Nation's path with their dead!
What unnamed battles! what thumps and bumps!
 What saber slashes with the broad, bright hoe!
 What weeds in phalanx! what stumps in row!
What rank vines fortified in rows of stumps!

Just stumps and nettles and weed-choked corn
 Tiptoeing to wave but one blade in air!

Dank milkweed here, and rank burdock there
Besieging and storming that blade forlorn!
Such weed-bred fevers, slow sapping the brave—
The homesick heart and the aching head!
The hoe and the hoe, 'till the man lay dead
And the great west wheels rolled over his grave.

And the saying grew, as sayings will grow
From hard endeavor and bangs and bumps:
"He got in a mighty hard row for stumps;
But he tried, and died trying to hoe his row."
O braver and brighter this ten-pound hoe,
Than brightest, broad saber of Waterloo!
Nor ever fell soldier more truly true
Than he who died trying to hoe his row.

The weeds are gone and the stumps are gone—
The huge hop-toad and the copperhead,
And a million bent sabers flash triumph instead
From stately, clean corn in the diamond-sown dawn.
But the heroes have vanished, save here and there,
Far out and afield like some storm-riven tree,
Leans a last survivor of Thermopylæ,
Leafless and desolate, lone and bare.

His hands are weary, put by the hoe;
His ear is dull and his eyes are dim.
Give honor to him and give place for him,
For he bled and he led us, how long ago!
And ye who inherit the fields he won,
Lorn graves where the Wabash slips away,
Go fashion green parks where your babes may
play
Unhindered of stumps or of weeds in the sun.

LINEs THAT PAPA LIKED

I have hewn some weeds, swung a heavy, broad
hoe—

Such weeds! such a mighty hard row for stumps!

Such up-hill struggles, such down-hill slumps

As you, please God, may never once know!

But the sea lies yonder, just a league below,

All down-hill now, and I go my way—

Not far to go, and not much to say,

Save that I tried, tried to hoe my row.

AT MARY'S FOUNTAIN, NAZARETH

What sound was that? A pheasant's whir?

What stroke was that? Lean low thine ear.

Is that the stroke of the carpenter,

That far, faint echo that we hear?

Is that the sound that sometime Bedouins tell

Of hammer stroke as from His hand it fell?

It is the stroke of the carpenter,

Through eighteen hundred years and more

Still sounding down the hallowed stir

Of patient toil; as when He wore

The leathern dress,—the echo of a sound

That thrills for aye the toiling, sensate ground.

Hear Mary weaving! Listen! Hear

The thud of loom at weaving time

In Nazareth. I weave this dear

Tradition with my lowly rhyme.

Believing everywhere that she may hear

The sound of toil, sweet Mary bends an ear.

Yea, this the toil that Jesus knew;
Yet we complain if we must bear.
Are we more dear? Are we more true?
Give us, O God, and do not spare!
Give us to bear as Christ and Mary bore
With toil by leaf-girt Nazareth of yore!

TO SAVE A SOUL

"How shall man surely save his soul?"
'Twas sunset by the Jordan. Gates
Of light were closing, and the whole
Vast heaven hung darkened as the fates.
"How shall man surely save his soul?" he said,
As fell the kingly day, discrowned and dead.

Then Christ said: "Hear this parable:
Two men set forth and journeyed fast
To reach a place ere darkness fell
And closed the gates ere they had passed;
Two worthy men, each free alike of sin,
But one did seek most sure to enter in.

"And so when in their path there lay
A cripple with a broken staff,
The one did pass straight on his way,
While one did stoop and give the half
His strength, and all his time did nobly share
Till they at sunset saw their city fair.

"And he who would make sure ran fast
To reach the golden sunset gate,
Where captains and proud chariots passed,
But, lo, he came one moment late!

LINES THAT PAPA LIKED

The gate was closed, and all night long he cried;
He cried and cried, but never watch replied.

“Meanwhile the man who cared to save
Another as he would be saved,
Came slowly on, gave bread and gave
Cool waters, as he stooped and laved
The wounds. At last, bent double with his weight,
He passed, unchid, the porter’s private gate.

“Hear then this lesson, hear and learn:
He who would save his soul, I say,
Must lose his soul; must dare to turn
And lift the fallen by the way;
Must make his soul worth saving by some deed
That grows, and grows some small last seed.”

THE VOICE OF THE DOVE

Come, listen O Love to the voice of the dove,
Come, hearken and hear him say
“There are many Tomorrows, my Love, my Love,
There is only one Today.”

And all day long you can hear him say
This day in purple is rolled
And the baby stars of the milky way
They are cradled in cradles of gold.

Now what is thy secret serene gray dove
Of singing so sweetly away?
“There are many Tomorrows, my Love, my Love,
There is only one Today.”

WASHINGTON BY THE DELAWARE

The snow was red with patriot blood,
The proud foe tracked the blood-red snow.
The flying patriots crossed the flood
A tattered, shattered band of woe.
Forlorn each barefoot hero stood,
With bare head bended low.

"Let us cross back! Death waits us here:
Recross or die!" the chieftan said.
A famished soldier dropped a tear—
A tear that froze as it was shed:
For oh, his starving babes were dear—
They had but this for bread!

A captain spake: "It cannot be!
These bleeding men, why, what could they?
'Twould be as snowflakes in a sea!"
The worn chief did not heed or say.
He set his firm lips silently,
Then turned aside to pray.

And as he kneeled and prayed to God,
God's finger spun the stars in space;
He spread his banner blue and broad,
He dashed the dead sun's stripes in place,
Till war walked heaven fire shod
And lit the chieftain's face:

Till every soldier's heart was stirred,
Till every sword shook in its sheath—
"Up! up! Face back. But not one word!"
God's flag above; the ice beneath—

LINES THAT PAPA LIKED

They crossed so still, they only heard
The icebergs grind their teeth!

Ho! Hessians, hirelings at meat
While praying patriots hunger so!
Then, bang! Boom! Bang! Death and defeat!
And blood? Ay, blood upon the snow!
Yet not the blood of patriot feet,
But heart's blood of the foe!

O ye who hunger and despair!
O ye who perish for the sun,
Look up and dare, for God is there;
And man can do what man has done!
Think, think of darkling Delaware!
Think, think of Washington!

FOR THOSE WHO FAIL *

"All honor to him who shall win the prize,"
The world has cried for a thousand years;
But to him who tries, and who fails and dies,
I give great honor and glory and tears:

Give glory and honor and pitiful tears
To all who fail in their deeds sublime;
Their ghosts are many in the van of years,
They were born with Time, in advance of their Time.

Oh, great is the hero who wins a name,
But greater many and many a time

*From "Memorie and Rime," by permission of Funk & Wagnalls, publishers of the Standard Dictionary and the Standard Library, of which this above book is one.

LINES THAT PAPA LIKED

Some pale-faced fellow who dies in shame,
And lets God finish the thought sublime.

And great is the man with a sword undrawn,
And good is the man who refrains from wine;
But the man who fails and yet still fights on,
Lo, he is the twin-born brother of mine.

THE LIGHT OF CHRIST'S FACE

Behold how glorious! Behold
The light of Christ's face; and such light!
The Moslem, Buddhist, as of old,
Gropes helpless on in hopeless night.
But lo, where Christ comes, crowned with flame,
Ten thousand triumphs in Christ's name.

Elijah's chariot of fire
Chained lightnings harnessed to his car!
Jove's thunders bridled by a wire—
Call unto nations "here we are!"
Lo! all the world one sea of light,
Save where the Paynim walks in night.

CALIFORNIA'S RESURRECTION

The rain! The rain! The generous rain!
All things are his who knows to wait.
Behold the rainbow bends again
Above the storied, gloried Gate—
God's written covenant to men
In Tyrian tints on cloth of gold,
Such as no tongue or pen hath told!

LINES THAT PAPA LIKED

Behold brown grasses where you pass—
A sleeping lion's tawny mane,
Brown-breasted Mother Earth in pain
Of travail—God's forgiving grass
Long three days dead to rise again
To lead us upward, on and on—
Each blade a shining sabre drawn.

Behold His Covenant is true!
Lo! California soon shall wear
About her ample breast each hue
That yonder hangs high-arched mid air!
Behold the very grasses knew!
Behold the Resurrection is!
Behold what witness like to this?

IN MEN WHOM MEN CONDEMN

In men whom men condemn as ill
I find so much of goodness still,
In men whom men pronounce divine
I find so much of sin and blot,
I hesitate to draw a line
Between the two, where God has not.

DEATH IS DELIGHTFUL

Death is delightful. Death is dawn,
The waking from a weary night
Of fevers unto truth and light.
Fame is not much, love is not much,
Yet what else is there worth the touch
Of lifted hands with dagger drawn?

So surely life is little worth :
Therefore I say, look up ; therefore
I say, one little star has more
Bright gold than all the earth of earth.

THE SONG OF THE SILENCE

O, heavens, the eloquent song of the silence !
Asleep lay the sun in the vines, on the sod,
And asleep in the sun lay the green-girdled islands,
As rock'd to their rest in the cradle of God.
God's poet is silence ! His song is unspoken,
And yet so profound, so loud, and so far,
It fills you, it thrills you with measures unbroken,
And as soft, and as fair, and as far as a star.

The shallow seas moan. From the first they have
mutter'd
And mourn'd, as a child, and have wept at their
will . . .
The poems of God are too grand to be utter'd :
The dreadful deep seas they are loudest when still.

THE TREES

The trees they lean'd in their love unto trees,
That lock'd in their loves, and were so made
strong,
Stronger than armies ; ay, stronger than seas
That rush from their caves in a storm of song.

THE LAST SUPPER

"And when they had sung an hymn they went out unto the Mount of Olives."—Bible.

What song sang the twelve with the Saviour
When finish'd the sacrament wine?
Were they bow'd and subdued in behavior,
Or bold as made bold with a sign?

What sang they? What sweet song of Zion
With Christ in their midst like a crown?
While here sat Saint Peter, the lion;
And there like a lamb, with head down,

Sat Saint John, with his silken and raven
Rich hair on his shoulders, and eyes
Lifting up to the faces unshaven
Like a sensitive child's in surprise.

Was the song as strong fishermen swinging
Their nets full of hope to the sea?
Or low, like the ripple-wave, singing
Sea-songs on their loved Galilee?

Were they sad with foreshadow of sorrows,
Like the birds that sing low when the breeze
Is tip-toe with a tale of tomorrows,—
Of earthquakes and sinking of seas?

Ah! soft was their song as the waves are
That fall in low musical moans;
And sad I should say as the winds are
That blow by the white gravestones.

MOTHER EGYPT

Dark-browed, she broods with weary lids
Beside her Sphynx and Pyramids,
With low and never-lifted head.
If she be dead, respect the dead;
If she be weeping, let her weep;
If she be sleeping, let her sleep;
For lo, this woman named the stars!
She suckled at her tawny dugs
Your Moses while you reeked in wars
And prowled your woods, nude, painted thugs.

Then back, brave England; back in peace
To Christian isles of fat increase!
Go back! Else bid your high priests mold
Their meek bronze Christs to cannon bold;
Take down their cross from proud St. Paul's
And coin it into cannon-balls!
You tent not far from Nazareth;
Your camps trench where his child-feet strayed.
If Christ had seen this work of death!
If Christ had seen these ships invade!

I think the patient Christ had said,
"Go back, brave men! Take up your dead;
Draw down your great ships to the seas;
Repass the Gates of Hercules.
Go back to wife with babe at breast,
And leave lorn Egypt to her rest."
Or is Christ dead, as Egypt is?
Ah, England, hear me yet again;
There's something grimly wrong in this—
So like some gray, sad woman slain.

What would you have your mother do?
 Hath she not done enough for you?
 Go back! And when you learn to read,
 Come read this obelisk. Her deed
 Like yonder awful forehead is
 Disdainful silence. Like to this
 What lessons have you writ in stone
 To passing nations that shall stand?
 Why, years as hers will leave you lone
 And level as yon yellow sand.

Saint George? Your lions? Whence are they?
 From awful, silent Africa.
 This Egypt is the lion's lair;
 Beware, brave Albion, beware!
 I feel the very Nile should rise
 To drive you from this sacrifice.
 And if the seven plagues should come?
 The red seas swallow sword and steed?
 Lo! Christian lands stand mute and dumb
 To see thy more than Moslem deed.



BYRON AND NEWSTEAD

BYRON AND NEWSTEAD



HAT would I not have given in my youth to have had the truthful and simple story of Lord Byron's life!

Believing there may be others to-day as eager as I was then to know the truth about this great, good poet, the plain story of his life, at home and in his own house, his habits of toil, his daily walk and work, I have set it down, so far as I could trace it a short generation after his death.

As to the greatness or goodness of Lord Byron there is only time and space to say that I esteem him very great, and so far as I could find out from his few surviving personal friends, he must have been, at heart, a truly good man. From the heaps and heaps of manuscripts stored away and sacredly preserved in Newstead Abbey, he must have been one of the most industrious men that ever lived. It seems past belief that he could have done all this work with his own hand. Yet there it is, half a ton of it, I should guess, enough to cover a ten-acre field, all in the same scrawling, sprawling hand, not half of which has ever seen the light, and never will, for it is dim and indistinct now and almost quite unintelligible. And this is saying nothing of the Journal and other papers burned by his foolish literary executors.

A man who toils so incessantly is not only socially a clean man but he really has not time to be a bad man, even though he may possibly be bad at heart.

But not only at Newstead Abbey, the old home of his youth and early manhood, but everywhere on

the continent where he had lived and labored I could hear only of his sober, patient and persistent industry and devotion to art. I lived long enough at Genoa to find that his life there, along with the Shelleys, was simple, sincere and clean. From Genoa I went to Florence, as the guest of our Consul General, Lorimer Graham. I wanted to live with Mr. Graham because he and his most amiable lady lived in the house occupied by Byron and the Shelleys, when they made their home in Florence. Only the same story of toil, reading, writing and research in art.

You may find a few pages of his journal which were published in his complete works. You will read there, day after day, this monotonous entry: "Read, wrote, rode, fired pistols. Rode toward Parma, fired pistols. Wrote, read, rode toward Pisa, fired pistols."

At Venice, under the guidance of Browning, who had left Florence to live in this latter place, after the death of his gifted wife, I found only the same story of industry, sobriety and devotion to art.

Lord Houghton, to whom I had dedicated my complete poems in London, did me the distinguished honor to ask me to spend the winter with him in Greece. We most naturally followed in Byron's footsteps in visiting historical scenes, and while little could be learned there of the great man's private life, we found everywhere the most unusual reverence for his memory. The King of Greece spoke his name with profound respect and assured us, more than once, that if Lord Byron had lived he surely would have been chosen by Greece for her first king.

Here is a sketch of "the vast and venerable pile,"

the noble poet's home, as I found it and pictured it for *Harper's Magazine*:

In Sherwood Forest Robin Hood roamed with his merry men, and with it has been associated the names of the pious and mysterious Henry, Charles the martyr, Nell Gwynne, Lord Byron, and indeed many of the most illustrious Englishmen. Doubtless in Robin Hood's days one could roam almost from one end of Nottinghamshire to the other "under the greenwood tree." But things have changed. Revisiting England recently I saw steam plows rattling over and tearing up the very heart of this historical old forest, and heard the click and rumble of reapers to right and left and everywhere; and the present owner of Newstead Abbey, who took me out to see his plows at work, talked of drainage and fertilization, plowing, planting and reaping, on this classic, almost sacred soil, with all the coolness and composure that might characterize the simplest old farmer who owns any one of the vast wheat fields of Dakota. The mud of the ancient and poetic estate of Newstead Abbey stuck to our boots just the same as it might in Illinois or Oregon. And the rain fell upon us here the same as there, and drove us to the shelter of a red brick farmhouse hard by. This farmhouse and barn are built on an elevation, and while I stood in the door of the stables and saw a great flock of green-headed ducks waddle down to a little pond, and waited for the rain to cease, I looked out on the forest, or rather the site of the overthrown forest, and saw only fields—fields of green and yellow grain—as far as the eye could reach. Ancient Sherwood Forest, too well known to the world to need a word of history here, is no more.

Newstead, or New Stede (new place), as its pious founders named it, is to all lovers of books the very heart and core of Sherwood Forest now, and ever has been since the publication of "Childe Harold." Right here are woods indeed; as you look out from the abbey in any direction, your eye meets only forest and lake.

The mossy old abbey, which Washington Irving so lovingly and perfectly described, is now a private residence. And yet, in certain seasons, it is the most populous and joyous place possible. For here are then gathered many of the wits and dignitaries of the world. Were I going to Europe a stranger, I would not ask to be presented at court, I would not care particularly to be the lion of the London clubs or the favorite of the hour in France; I would exchange all these privileges, could they by any chance be mine, for a week or so at Newstead Abbey, when all nature is in full feather, and the accomplished host and hostess have gathered their friends about them—clergymen, travelers, wits and philosophers, painters and poets. The monks who built the old abbey have passed away, the sad and sorrowing poet has ended his pilgrimage, and these now reign instead; and what a poem Colonel and Mrs. Webb have made of the place! Colonel Wildman, who bought the estate of Lord Byron, is said to have spent more than a million dollars in restoring the abbey and grounds. One cannot but feel that it is a sort of special providence that brought as his successor this wealthy companion of Dr. Livingstone from Africa to carry on the work of restoration after the generous Colonel Wildman had lost his fortune.

Newstead Abbey from the east side presents not

the least appearance of a ruin. Indeed it is filled with the shouts of merry children as they burst from their schoolroom and storm about the great halls and up and down the stairways wide enough to admit the ascent of a California mule team.

Nearly all sign of the ancient monks has perished from the abbey. There is not even the graveyard left now. Yes, the graveyard and the graves are here still, but the gravestones are gone, and the lawn, level and soft, and smooth as a carpet, covers all. Yet there is one not unknown grave there, and one gravestone. What a sermon! The dead monks are forgotten. Their tombs are down, and their graves leveled. The dog, Boatswain, is buried in their dust, and the faithful dog of the poet has a tomb ten times nobler than that of the poet himself. I believe it was in digging this grave that they found the skull of which the Childe Byron made a drinking cup.

Newstead Abbey is made of imperishable stone, and it is impossible to prophesy what will be its end. It looks as if it might stand forever. On the north-west corner of the old chapel, which is now a ruin covered with ivy, although attached to the abbey, you can see where grape and canister, probably from Cromwell's canon, have eaten into the sandstone.

It would be idle, of course, to attempt a description of the vast interior of Newstead Abbey, or to make mention of the relics there. The newly-recovered portrait of Lord Byron is the most noteworthy of them all. This is a beautiful water-color, and was given to his lordship by a college friend at Cambridge. From this picture it seems to me that you can read something of the character, the

pride, the pomp, the poetic love of figure and color, and all that marked the future of the immortal poet. The curious will note that the right foot is partly concealed. When Mrs. Webb heard of this New Picture, as it is called, although older, of course, than the other, she determined to have it at any cost, and set about to obtain possession of it. On the same wall with this, and that oil-painting of the poet so well known to the world, hangs the most perfect picture extant of Dr. Livingstone. It was here, with his old friend and companion, Colonel Webb, within the walls of Newstead, and out there in the shadows of Sherwood Forest, that Dr. Livingstone wrote his books.

The most interesting relics, of course, are objects relating to Lord Byron—his will (a sorry scrawl in every sense), piles of unpublished poems, unpublished letters—all sacredly guarded by Mrs. Webb. In looking over the papers of the poet I observed that in the original copy of the "Pilgrimage" he wrote "Childe Byron," instead of "Childe Harold"; and it was clearly evident to me that this greatest poem of our language was not at first intended for publication. But in many parts of the interior you are reminded of some great national museum as you pass down the corridors or up the great stairways. The immense hall is a perfect "zoo" of stuffed lions, tigers, hyenas and indeed all the wild beasts and birds of Africa, which Colonel Webb killed and brought home when he quitted the company of Dr. Livingstone.

The oak which Lord Byron planted, and which was saved by Colonel Wildman, who transplanted it to higher ground, is an interesting feature of the present Sherwood Forest.

At the abbey there is a tower—at least it seems like a tower from within, although it does not look it from without—which Lord Byron and others believed to be haunted by a ghostly visitant in cowl and sandals. The poet claims to have seen this ghost a short time before his marriage to Miss Millbank. Washington Irving says, “his mind was tinged with superstition, and his innate infirmity was perhaps increased by passing much of his time in the lonely halls and cloisters of the abbey, then in a ruinous and melancholy state, and brooding over the skulls and effigies of its former inmates.” More than once you find allusions to this ghost in Lord Byron’s poems.

I wanted to see if it was in the power of any being to bridge over the awful darkness that lies at the end of all earthly journeys, and I determined to seize the first opportunity to take up my abode, if possible, in Lord Byron’s apartments. The Princess of Wales had recently left the abbey, and as we sat at dinner Mrs. Webb told a comic little incident connected with the Princess’ visit to the haunted tower. The three rooms are reached by ascending a narrow spiral stairway that winds a giddy course around a gloomy column. These rooms have no other egress or ingress, and two maids happened to be in them when the Princess—at the head of her party, parasol in hand, and laughing at the idea of meeting a ghost—unheralded, hastily entered. Passing through the ante-room, and then the spacious bed-room, furnished, as far as possible, with the appointments used by the poet, she passed on to the page’s room, and here she poked her parasol into a deep, dark, curtained alcove, saying to the party pressing after

her, "But I want to see the ghost." Horrors! the point of her parasol struck a solid; there was a screech and a scream, and the Princess fell back into the arms of the "coming King," while a pretty, rosy maid fell forward on her knees before the Princess, piteously begging her pardon.

"And, do you know, I, too, want to see the ghost of Newstead."

I said this with so much earnestness that a man in black, with a clerical air, put up his glasses and looked at me with great emphasis.

"But you would not like to sleep there in the haunted room?" protested a dozen voices curiously.

"I should like nothing better."

"Then you shall be moved in there at once. It is the prettiest and pleasantest part of the abbey, else Lord Byron would not have spent so many years of his life in it. But you must sleep there also; for I promise you that the only ghosts you will ever see at Newstead will be those you see in your sleep," laughed the good-natured lady.

When the ladies left us over our walnuts and coffee, so much was said on the subject that I felt pretty certain that others there had an equally deep interest with myself in the ghost.

The apartment was made ready for my reception the next day, and I was to spend that night in the very bed of Lord Byron, waiting for the Black Friar of Newstead Abbey. The man with the clerical look led me aside by the sleeve after dinner, and hooking his glasses over his nose, talked to me long and earnestly about ghosts, from the Witch of Endor down to the modern apparitions which spiritualists claim to be familiar with. He confessed himself to be a firm believer in ghosts, and shaking

my hand cordially, said he would await results with breathless interest.

A little before midnight I bade good-night to the few remaining in the drawing-room, and followed the powdered footman, with his two great candles, up and around and on and through the sounding halls of the old abbey, and at last climbed the corkscrew stairs and stood in the haunted rooms.

The bed, with its golden coronets and gorgeous yellow curtains that are literally falling to pieces from age, was ready to receive me. The man placed the candles on the table and withdrew. I was alone in the haunted chamber at the hour of midnight. I sat down at the table, the very table used by the poet, noted the date, events of the day, and then this item, which I quote from my note-book:

"Slight headache; a little nervous; don't think I am afraid, but doubt if I can sleep; don't like this at all, but am in for it; shall see something; not the Black Friar, but Lord Byron."

After some other trifling notes and a futile attempt to write a poem on the table used by the inspired nobleman, I threw down my pen and walked to the deep bay window at the west, overlooking the lake. It was the loveliest night possible. The moon lay on the water like silver. Soon I undressed hastily, blew out one of the candles, and set the other by the bedstead as I lay down. I did not dare to blow it out. It takes a great deal of courage to admit this ugly truth. The great, heavy, rich and tattered curtains of yellow silk were like tinder, and it was a dangerous thing to leave the candle burning, particularly after dinner. But it did not seem to me so dangerous just then as to blow it out; so, I think, I fell asleep.

Suddenly I heard, or rather felt, the door slowly open. I looked straight ahead as I lay there, but did not move. A figure entered from the open door, but I could not see it. I felt it stop at the table. Then I felt it advancing upon me where I lay. I distinctly heard the clink of two candlesticks. Then I felt, or rather saw, that my light was being slowly and certainly withdrawn. I cautiously turned my head, and was just in time to see the patient footman, who had been waiting all the time outside, bearing away the lighted candle. Oh, how ashamed I was!

When I opened my eyes next morning, or rather next noon, what a vision of beauty! Swan on the lake, cattle on the hills beyond, and sunlight and love, peace and calm delight everywhere. I had never had a more perfectly refreshing sleep in all my life.

The man with the glasses was waiting for me, but I had nothing to say. I could only assure him that I had seen, heard, felt, nothing whatever. Still I could not but think that I surely should and would receive some sign from some one beyond the dark before I bade farewell to the haunted rooms.

The next night I was quite tranquil. The same attentive footman led me to my rooms, silently set down his candles, retired and waited without as before. I wrote a few letters, then two or three pages of memoranda, from which I extract the following: "I have read, revered, followed Lord Byron all about the world, and if he don't come to me now, my faith in the reappearance of the dead will be greatly shaken. Don't want to see the Friar, but I am afraid I shall. No headache, perfectly well. Will now lie down; a few minutes of one."

My lighted candle disappeared from the table, and I soon fell asleep. The same perfect rest as before. The noonday sun was bright on the lake as I opened my eyes and looked out on the wooded hills beyond, and that is all.

And so, many nights passed, and I really came to like my new rooms better than the ones I left. Still I could not write there, further than a few letters, and I somehow felt all the time that I must certainly see something, or get some sign of immortality from the other world.

One night, as the moon settled low over the lake, and looked through the great bay window straight into the large mirror above the mantelpiece, the level beams shot at sharp angles as they were reflected from the glass into my face. Now eight years before that, the old lady who first led me through Newstead Abbey told me that Lord Byron used to see ghosts at night in this looking-glass. I felt that that part of the ghost mystery was explained. I had slept under the open skies too much not to know how the moon will provoke you to see strange signs and sights if you let her beams fall into your face as you sleep.

One night, after I had become not only accustomed but really attached to the haunted rooms, I dreamed—let me call it a dream—that I was in another land, a land that I could not name. I was in great terror, and anxious to escape from the shore. I stole down narrow streets and sought the water-side, when it seemed that some one touched me on the shoulder. "Come with me," he said, "I have a boat here." Then it seemed we descended to the water, stepped into a shallow boat, shaped not unlike a sea-shell, and without another word or sign moved

swiftly away and out of the great bay to the open sea. The poet, with his cloak about him, stood looking straight out on the gray, open ocean and the low, gathering clouds before us, but never once bent his eyes to mine. Faster and faster we flew, into the open sea, the clouds and storms, till I could see nothing at all of the noble figure before me, hear nothing but the roar of the storm about us. And that is all I can recall of my dream, for dream it was, I reckon, a meaningless dream.

At all events, that is all I ever saw or dreamed, and just exactly what I saw, or dreamed, in Lord Byron's haunted rooms at Newstead Abbey. Yet I must admit that the dream made too strong an impression for me to recount it to the curious at the time, and I made no mention of it at all until long after.



LINES MOTHER LIKED

LINES MOTHER LIKED

OH, FOR ENGLAND'S OLD-TIME THUNDER!



H, for England's old sea thunder!
Oh, for England's bold sea men,
When we banged her over, under
And she banged us back again!
Better old-time strife and stresses,
Cloud topt towers, walls, distrust;
Better wars than lazinesses,
Better loot than wine and lust!
Give us seas? Why, we have oceans!
Give us manhood, sea men, men!
Give us deeds, loves, hates, emotions!
Else give back these seas again.

THE BRAVEST BATTLE

The bravest battle that ever was fought;
Shall I tell you where and when?
On the maps of the world you will find it not;
It was fought by by the mothers of men.

Nay, not with cannon or battle shot,
With sword or braver pen;
Nay, not with eloquent word or thought,
From mouths of wonderful men.

But deep in a woman's walled-up heart—
Of woman that would not yield,
But patiently, silently bore her part—
Lo! there in that battle-field.

LINES THAT MOTHER LIKED

No marshaling troop, no bivouac song;
No banners to gleam and wave;
And oh! these battles they last so long—
From babyhood to the grave!

Yet, faithful still as a bridge of stars,
She fights in her walled-up town—
Fights on and on in the endless wars,
Then silent, unseen—goes down.

A few years ago, when living in my log cabin, Washington, some ladies came to inform me that I had been chosen to write a poem for the unveiling of an equestrian statue of a hero, the hero of "The bravest battles that ever were fought."

When they had delivered their message I told them that the beautiful city was being disfigured by these pitiful monuments to strife, not one in forty being fit works of art, and that I hoped and believed that the last one of these would be condemned to the scrap heap within the next century. I reminded them that while nearly every city in the Union had more or less of these monstrosities I had seen but one little figure in honor of woman; that of a crude bit of granite to the memory of a humble baker woman in a back street of New Orleans, who gave away bread to the poor. I finally told them, however, that if they would come back next morning I would have a few lines about "The bravest battles that ever were fought."

One of them came, got the few lines, but they were not read at the unveiling. However, they were read later in New York, by a New Orleans

lady, of noble French extraction, the Baroness de Bazus, and they have since been read many times, in many lands, and, I am told, in many languages.

THE DEAD CZAR

* * * * *

A storm burst forth! From out the storm
 The clean, red lightning leapt,
 And lo! a prostrate royal form . . .
 And Alexander slept!
 Down through the snow, all smoking; warm,
 Like any blood, his crept.
 Yea, one lay dead, for millions dead!
 One red spot in the snow,
 For one long damning line of red,
 Where exiles endless go—
 The babe at breast, the mother's head
 Bowed down, and dying so.
 * * * * *

And did a woman do this deed?
 Then build her scaffold high,
 That all may on her forehead read
 Her martyr's right to die!
 Ring Cossack round on royal steed!
 Now lift her to the sky!
 But see! From out the black hood shines
 A light few look upon!
 Lorn exiles, see, from dark, deep mines,
 A star at burst of dawn! . . .
 A thud! A creak of hangman's lines!—
 A frail shape jerked and drawn! . . .
 * * * * *

LINES THAT MOTHER LIKED

The Czar is dead; the woman dead,
About her neck a cord.
In God's house rests his royal head—
Hers in a place abhorred—
Yet I had rather have her bed
Than thine, most royal lord!
Aye, rather be that woman dead,
Than thee, dead-living Czar,
To hide in dread, with both hands red,
Behind great bolt and bar . . .
You may control to the North Pole,
But God still guides His star.

MOTHERS OF MEN

"Oh, give me good mothers! Yea, great, glad
mothers,
Proud mothers of dozens, indeed, twice ten;
Fair mothers of daughters and mothers of men,
With old-time clusters of sisters and brothers,
When grand Greeks lived like to gods, and when
Brave mothers of men, strong breasted and broad,
Did exult in fulfilling the purpose of God."

THE LITTLE BROWN MAN

Where now the brownie fisher-lad?
His hundred thousand fishing-boats
Rock idly in the reedy moats;
His baby wife no more is glad.
But yesterday, with all Nippon,
Beneath his pink-white cherry-trees,
In chorus with his brown, sweet bees,
He careless sang, and sang right on.

LINES THAT MOTHER LIKED

Take care! for he has ceased to sing;
His startled bees have taken wing!

His cherry-blossoms drop like blood;
His bees begin to storm and sting;
His seas flash lightning, and a flood
Of crimson stains their wide, white ring;
His battle-ships belch hell, and all
Nippon is but one Spartan wall!
Aye, he, the boy of yesterday,
Now holds the bearded Russ at bay;
While, blossom'd steeps above, the clouds
Wait idly, still, as waiting shrouds.

But oh, beware his scorn of death,
His love of Emperor, of isles
That boast a thousand bastioned miles
Above the clouds where never breath
Of frost or foe has ventured yet,
Or foot of foreign man has set!
Beware his scorn of food (his fare
Is scarcely more than sweet sea-air);
Beware his cunning, sprite-like skill—
But most beware his dauntless will.

Goliath, David, once again,
The giant and the shepherd youth—
The tallest, smallest of all men,
The trained in tongue, the trained in truth.
Beware this boy, this new mad man!
That erst mad man of Macedon,
Who drank and died at Babylon;
That shepherd lad; the Corsican—
They sat the thrones of earth! Beware
This new mad man whose drink is air!

LINES THAT MOTHER LIKED

His bees are not more slow to strife,
But, stirred, they court a common death!
He knows the decencies of life—
Of all men underneath the sun
He is the one clean man, the one
Who never knew a drunken breath!
Beware this sober, wee brown man,
Who yesterday stood but a span
Beneath his blossomed cherry-trees,
Soft singing with his brother bees!

The brownie's sword is as a snake,
A sudden, sinuous copperhead:
It makes no flourish, no mistake;
It darts but once—the man is dead!
'Tis short and black; 'tis never seen
Save when, close forth, it leaps its sheath
And, snake-like, darts up from beneath.
But oh, its double edge is keen!
It strikes but once, then on, right on:
The sword is gone—the Russ is gone!

—*From the Century.*

The Japanese, or more properly the Nipponese, are the only entirely temperate people I ever knew, and travel has been my trade since a lad. True, there are English, American, French, German hotels at Nagasaki, Kobe, Tokio, and like large cities, where the tourist can have "all the comforts of a home" and disport himself much as at Newport or Saratoga. And here the little brown man often brings his venerable parent and others of his house to dine, observe foreigners, and listen to the music; but they all eat sparingly and drink not at all, in the sense that the white man drinks. His wildest dissipation is cold tea.

CHILKOOT PASS

And you, too, banged at the Chilkoot,
That rock-locked gate to the golden door!
These thunder-built steeps have words built to suit,
And whether you prayed or whether you swore
'Twere one where it seemed that an oath was a
prayer—
Seemed God couldn't care,
Seemed God wasn't there!

And you, too, climbed to the Klondike
And talked, as a friend, to those five-horned stars!
With muckluck shoon and with talspike
You, too, bared head to the bars,
The heaven-built bars where morning is born,
And drank with maiden morn
From Klondike's golden horn!

And you, too, read by the North Lights
Such sermons as never men say!
You sat and sat with the midnights
That sit and that sit all day:
You heard the silence, you heard the room,
Heard the glory of God in the gloom
When the icebergs boom and boom!

Then come to my Sunland, my soldier,
Aye, come to my heart and to stay;
For better crusader or bolder
Bared never a breast to the fray.
And whether you prayed or whether you cursed
You dared the best and you dared the worst
That ever brave man durst.

THE FOURTH IN HAWAIIAN WATERS

Sail, sail yon skies of cobalt blue,
O star-built banner of the brave!
We follow you, exult in you
Or Arctic peak or sapphire wave;
From mornlit Maine to dusk Luzon,
Or set of sun or burst of dawn.

From Honolulu's Sabbath seas,
From battle-torn Manila's bay
We toss you bravely to the breeze
This nation's natal day to stay—
To stay, to lead, lead on and on
Or set of sun or burst of dawn.

O ye who fell at Bunker Hill,
O ye who fought at Brandywine,
Behold your stars triumphant still;
Behold where Freedom builds her shrine,
Where Freedom still leads on and on,
Or set of sun or burst of dawn.

* * * * *



